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A · MODERATOR'S YEAR





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# A MODERATOR'S YEAR

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

BY

A. H. DRYSDALE, D.D.

LONDON

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## PREFATORY NOTE

INVITED by the Publisher to supply a book of sermons, it occurred to the writer that having been recently "Moderator" of the Synod or Supreme Court of the Church to which he has the honour to belong, he might select material he had used in discharge of his office, and so call the volume "A Moderator's Year."

With Presbyterians "The Moderator" is like "President of Conference" amongst Methodists, or "Chairman of the Union" with the Congregational or Baptist Churches.

In this ecclesiastical sense it has ancient and venerable associations with the Huguenots or French and other Reformed Churches on the Continent, three and a half centuries ago, and from them it passed into common use with Presbyterian Churches.

The word is found in the same true classic sense in Elizabethan literature, as, when Sir Walter Raleigh in his "History of the World" (Bk. I. ch. 10, sec. 2) writes, "Let Moses be the *Moderator* or judge of this dispute."

So it entered into University as well

as Ecclesiastical nomenclature. In Trinity College, Dublin, the two candidates who come out highest in degree honours are called senior and junior *moderators*. At Oxford and Cambridge, the Superintendent of Examinations is known still as Moderator and the intermediate examinations are Moderations, or *Moderations*. This is, of course, a reminiscence of the time when candidates in the schools had to maintain a thesis against opponents, and examinations were literally in the form of debate, and the examiner was said to "moderate" in the disputation. Curiously enough the same word is used still in connection with town's meetings in the United States.

"To moderate in a call" is the standard Presbyterian phrase for presiding over a meeting when the people have to choose from among the candidates one to fill the vacant pastoral charge; and indeed every minister who presides over any deliberative body, whether a Church-session, a Presbytery, a Synod or a General Assembly is called its Moderator. This volume will therefore be found to contain, besides sermons, some of the more distinctive work of a Moderator, in discharge of his special functions during his year of office.

# I

## THE NEW PURITANISM AND THE OLD

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—My first duty is the privileged one of thanking the Synod for the high honour to which it has been pleased to call me.

Next to God's favour and the approval of conscience, a man must prize such a mark of confidence from those he has been most closely associated with in life and work. Your Moderator will usually be, like my vigorous predecessor, an active and prominent city minister, a man of affairs and exceptional energy. But at times the Synod would express indebtedness to its more rural charges and ministers for certain elements of Church strength, and it would desire to encourage country brethren who labour under conditions differing from, but often not less trying than amid crowded populations. And surely it is to the no small credit of a Church like ours to keep up as it does so many fully equipped charges in this county of Northumberland, and I may be forgiven expressing the



conviction that in few parts of rural England will Free Church country work be seen to greater advantage than in some of the outlying districts between Tyne and Tweed.

Fathers and brethren, we are solemnised at each Synod by missing some who have not been permitted to continue by reason of death, and whose honoured faces we shall see among us no more. These perhaps are fewer than usual, but our estimate of their worth and our own loss will be best and most suitably expressed in those memorial minutes to be embodied in the permanent records of Synod.

Full twenty-five years have elapsed since our Presbyterian Union in England, and the temptation is strong to review these years, and estimate the gains of that Union and gather up its lessons.

But other circumstances of the hour seem rather to suggest that we enlarge the scope of our outlook and consider the New Puritanism that is now surging around us, and striving to reassert, and find fresh expression for, itself in the spirit and power of the old. May its hands be made strong!

#### PURITANISM NOT TO BE ASHAMED OF.

Puritanism is not a word to be ashamed of in England. "To the Puritans," says Hume,

“the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution”; and Hallam declares them “the depositaries of the sacred fire of liberty.” Suffice it to add, with the late lamented Professor Rawson Gardiner, “The distinctive feature of Puritanism was its clear conception of the immediate relation between every individual soul and God. Under its watchwords of faith and duty our English liberties were won, and however much its outward forms may have fallen into decay, it is certain that under the same watchwords alone will they be preserved as a heritage to our children”; or with the still more lamented J. R. Green: “It was from the moment of its seeming fall that its real victory began. In the Revolution of 1688 Puritanism did the work of civil liberty it failed to achieve in 1642. It wrought out, through Wesley and the revival of the eighteenth century, the work of religious reform, so that the history of English progress since the Restoration, on its moral and religious sides, has been the history of Puritanism.”

Thus Puritanism was not a mere local or transient outburst; but having vital affinities with the movements of the Huguenots of France, the Gueux or Beggars of the Netherlands, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Pilgrim Fathers of America, and the Methodists of later

date, it could not pass away like the Church of the Non-jurors or kindred sporadic efforts. It was destined to enter into the very life blood of England, to enrich its corpuscles with its own oxide of iron, and add thereby to the ruddy glow of the nation's spiritual health.

But, indeed, the Puritan note has come echoing down through all the ages, however feebly heard at times. To show this might lead us too far afield, though it were but justice to remember how the first to be named Puritans in the Christian Church, the Early Cathari and other misnamed heretics, were among the stoutest resisters of the corrupt sacerdotalism of their time, and loudest with the cry, "Back again to Scripture."

Along the same line followed men like Peter de Brueys, Henry Italico of Lausanne, Peter Valdo, Arnold of Brescia, Claud of Turin, and many other noble leaders of like ancestry with the Waldenses, Albigenses, the Reformers of Cologne, the twelfth century Publicani, and at length Wyclif and his Lollards, now indisputably shown to have been in all important respects the real precursors of English Puritanism—no new-fangled or parvenu growth, therefore, but with its tap-roots deep down in the earliest and richest Apostolic soil.

## THE VERY SOUL OF PROTESTANTISM

Times change ; but there are types which abide ; and Puritanism is a perennially recurring type, whose essence is Evangelical Protestantism, to which it served itself emphatically heir, the word Evangelical marking its gospel *spirit and substance*, and the word Protestant marking its divine *method*, a method commended by God Himself, as in Jeremiah xi. 7 : "I earnestly protested unto your fathers . . . rising early and *protesting*, saying, *Obey My voice*." Here is the genius of Protestantism, word and thing ; no mere negative protest only against human authority in religion, but a *positive* and emphatic protest on behalf of the Divine word alone, saying, *Obey My voice*. This was the attitude of the original "Gospellers," as the Reforming princes and preachers called themselves, when, at the Imperial Diet of Speyer, in 1529, they made the name of Protestant a familiar household word. For they said : "Before God, we *protest* that as there is no sure doctrine but what is conformable to God's own voice in His word, so we are resolved, by His grace, to maintain obedience to it pure and exclusive, without admitting anything that is contrary thereto."

This first principle of Protestantism, *Obey*

*My voice*, sets forth the one alone standard of Catholic faith and duty, for these Gospellers did not cease to be Catholic; in fact, they became Protestant, as many have done before and since, in order to keep themselves Catholic, everything beside that as a final standard being non-Catholic, narrow and sectarian. Puritanism just emphasised this, and so made the Evangelical Protestantism of England firmer far and more pronounced than it would otherwise have been. Puritanism was never, therefore, a mere negative attitude of mind. It meant fidelity to religion as a Spirit-felt power and an individual experience.

Now, by a somewhat noticeable coincidence, the very year 1564, which gave birth to Puritanism as a party name (though strongly resented by the Puritans themselves at first) saw the brand new Canons of the Council of Trent enforced by Papal Bull, and also the publication of the Council's famous Catechism. This showed the triumph of the arrogant counter-reformation faction. Puritanism rose up in answer to this, dreading, as it did, lest the compromising spirit which Anglicanism was beginning already to show might lead to some half-way house. Very ominous, for example, it was to find that Catechism of the Council of Trent despatch the 8th Article of



the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," in six pages, and yet devote as many as 215 pages to "the Sacraments." Looking into the index, there is no mention of either gospel or salvation. The word redemption is named in but one line, while the word *sacraments* gets thirty-four lines. Christ obtains only sixteen lines, and Holy Ghost eight, whereas baptism gets fifty-one, and Eucharist no fewer than seventy-six. There are twenty lines devoted to priests and the priesthood, but not a single reference is found to the priesthood of Christ. Such words as orders, confession and penance command their score of lines, while grace has only two, and the most evangelical words, like joy and peace, are never even mentioned. And all this in an index of twenty pages to an octavo manual of 600 pages of supposed Christian instruction, required to be translated into every vernacular tongue, while as yet no such translation was allowed for Scripture. In that catechism there is enough, no doubt, to lead any seeking soul to the Saviour, but everywhere through its pages we find ourselves in the region of a human labouring to gain salvation's blessings by human media and human merit, while there is not a single suggestion of their present free and enjoyable possession and experience. Here was an

object-lesson! It was the recrudescence of this kind of religion, with its semi-pagan accretions and corruptions, the Puritan most of all feared under the new Anglican settlement; and the present state of things surely justifies these fears.

#### WHAT THE PURITANS WANTED

What the Puritans wanted was in all matters of conscience fidelity to the scale and proportion of things revealed in the Word, and they resented, as an affront to that Word, anything of a rival order. The present Bishop of Durham, more Puritan than either of his great predecessors, does not himself shrink from applying this test to many of those revived vagaries that afflict his own Church and are reducing it to chaos. He makes it clear enough to the most ordinary intelligence that before this tribunal, and when brought to such a standard, all such questions as apostolic succession and validity of orders, priestly vestments, and historic episcopate, and, in short, the whole framework of canonised sacerdotalism must vanish from the scene. Such subjects should cease to be of any real interest to the Christian consciousness, or vex and plague the Christian Church. They would at once be relegated to the furthest back seats, if even

there they could find any accommodation at all. Such, then, is and has always been the Puritan contention, and "I hold," he adds, "that the man who habitually seeks God's heart in God's Word, *Cor Dei in Verbis Dei*, will, on the whole, develop his own life on lines far more true to the primal Christian type" than on any other lines whatever.

Now, Puritanism fearlessly and faithfully applied this principle all round; and, believing that what is so good for individual life and character will prove equally good for Church life and character too, it insisted on the same supreme deference to Scripture being brought to bear on all questions of Church worship, Church discipline, and Church administration. Everything in Church theory and usage must be brought to this test and standard; and Puritanism here would admit of no compromise. So it became evident that sooner or later Anglican and Puritan must part company. Their dividing line at first was not broad, but it went deep. They were not agreed on the final test and authority as to the Church. Anglicanism, as it rounded to its more fully-developed style of Anglo-Catholic compromise, while loyally accepting Scripture as the original depository of Church worship and practice, did also recognise in the early patristic and ecclesi-

astical traditions some legitimate co-ordinate authority upon such matters. To the Puritan, all binding traditions are those of Scripture alone, with whatever follows out of them by direct and necessary implication, the supreme Judge being ever the Holy Spirit speaking in the revealed Word; or, as Philip Henry expresses it, "To the command of my *superiors* I oppose the command of my *supreme*, saying, 'Be not ye servants of men, and call no man master,' which I do when I give a blind obedience to their injunctions, for the authority's sake of the injoiners giving me no reason, but only their own *Sic volo, sic jubeo*." No Church, no priest can answer to God for him; he must answer for himself. And the Puritan was well aware that if on any one point the early Fathers and Councils were more united than another, it was on this very principle—the binding force of what they called the Divine traditions of Scripture. "Custom without this," says even Cyprian, "is but the antiquity of error."

#### THE OLD PURITAN RECORD

Now, whatever may be said of the æsthetic or non-æsthetic side of Puritanism—and, as we may afterwards see, their supposed deficiency on this score has been vastly exaggerated—no

one will doubt that Puritan principles gave to the Puritans an indomitable fidelity to their own deep-rooted personal convictions and a courage and unbending integrity which bound them to constitutional freedom, while the Anglo-Catholic, believing more in traditional human authority, easily ranged himself on the side of absolutism alike in Church and State. So Puritanism became the anvil on which were struck out the ever-brightening sparks of civil and religious liberty. Happily, if the hammers were broken the anvil remains. *Mallei trituntur; incus manet.* It is not for us here and now to embitter the memories of the past; neither to cherish ancient grudges, nor indulge in useless recriminations. We deplore that in the Restoration Prayer-book no consideration was shown to the Puritans in the 600 alterations made in it. We deeply deplore that the Church of England then committed herself finally to "priest" instead of "minister" before the absolution, and to "bishops, priests, and deacons" in substitution for the previous "bishops, pastors, and ministers of the Church." We do not wonder she is now labouring under the heavy burdens then imposed by the Act of Uniformity. And we can afford to look with a tender sympathy on her strugglings with the solemn responsibility she then assumed and



the critical dangers she yet must face. It may be that, as in the rending of the Hebrew kingdom, God worked out His own higher counsels for His Church's good, He will yet over-rule the rending which then took place for better ends than were contemplated by those who forced it on.

Confessedly, these old outstanding difficulties and differences are not to be lightly or easily bridged over. And we may welcome and aid every hopeful indication that may seem to point in that direction.

But recurring to the year 1662 "it is impossible," says Mr Gladstone, "to avoid the deeply interesting question what became of the partner then ejected from the firm? The old English Puritanism has largely passed, on a widened scale, and with features mitigated but developed and enlarged into the modern English Nonconformity. . . . It travelled through a period of declension; but it has since developed throughout the British Empire, the United States and heathen lands into a vast diversified organisation of what may be roughly termed Evangelical Protestantism, which, viewed at large, is inclusive of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and elsewhere, which has received a large collateral accession from the movement of Wesley, and may be estimated moderately

at one-tenth of the entire numerical strength of Christendom. It depends almost entirely on the voluntary tributes of Christian affection, and it has become a solid, inexorable fact which no rational enquirer into religious history can venture to overlook."

#### THE NEW AND WIDER PURITANISM OF TO-DAY

Where stands this new and wider Puritanism to-day? A century ago it was far down in numbers, resources, and influence, some of it under a dark cloud by the loss of that tender Spirit-taught mysticism which was one of the charms of the earlier Puritans. By processes painful to think of, faith degenerated into hard speculative rationalism, ceasing to be a warm personal trust in a living, loving Saviour, and the need for God's Holy Spirit was little, if at all, realised. With the Evangelical revival came a new breath of spring, and Wesley's movement supplied the twofold want of the age, heaven-born zeal and organised religious cohesion. What strides have been made since then! Anglican growth, great as it is, cannot stand comparison with Free Church development at home and abroad; for if the one includes four million communicants, the other can speak of its twenty millions of them; while in ecclesiastical accommodation of various kinds,

and in several other respects, it has outstripped its ancient rival many times over, despite its social and political prestige as the civil establishment of this land. But a national Church is at best a Jewish conception, and belongs to a former dispensation. The Christian Church must realise its own higher ideas as a free, self-governing, international, ecumenical fellowship, transcending racial and linguistic distinctions and large multiplicity of varying forms, while yet seeking to pervade and penetrate them all with the spirit and mind of its Lord. For the Church of Christ is not, of course, identical or co-extensive with His kingdom, which is meant to embrace all human interests and activities in politics, science, art, trade, learning, and the like. It is the instrument and agency for defending and extending that kingdom, to which it stands related very much as the executive and administrative forces in any civil State. By acting as the family of God in and on the world, it has to turn the whole family of mankind into both Church and kingdom, the brotherhood in Christ Jesus sealing and attesting the Divine Fatherhood and laying the alone solid basis for a true brotherhood of men. The problems of the future will probably be more social than ecclesiastical, and these being chiefly moral in their roots, because the

bulk of human misery springs mostly from personal or domestic vices, like indolence, improvidence, and self-indulgence, the new Puritanism should show to advantage here without mixing itself up beyond its own province or dabbling in questions not given to it to solve. We think of the words of J. R. Green: "The English home as we conceive it now was a Puritan creation." So it is the Puritan spirit that must largely create it anew. Or, again: "In its own *constitutional* temper Puritanism gave to England its noblest public gift; and hardly less noble for society was its conception of social equality." In the same spirit must the new Puritanism strive for the Christian regeneration of society in all its relationships, each one, irrespective of sex or status, being made a prophet, priest, and king unto God, and everyone considered responsible for everyone, himself included. So may the new Puritanism best slough off some ungainly and undesirable associations of the past, the very vehemence of former energy having overflowed in rough and rugged channels, with too much sectarian narrowness of temper and needless bitterness and jealousies in the scattering and dividing of its forces.

Not that mere multiplying of denominations need be wholly an evil—the complex of the

Free Churches, which Governments must more and more respect, being possibly a legitimate provision for different religious tastes, temperaments, and constitutions, just as varieties of wholesome food or dress may best meet all kinds of physical need. It is unchristian bigotry and uncharitableness that is the evil to be deplored ; but now that this spirit is fading away and ancient sores are being healed, we are cheered by the drawing together of many allied members of Christ's visible body, with large latitude both of diversity and of co-operation. A tree may send out twigs in quite opposite directions further and further away from each other only to enhance its own unity and symmetry, provided all the branches grow more manifestly into the one trunk or stem, the centre and source of the common unity and life. Every conception of unity in the Church will be faulty that does not stake all on every branch beginning from and ever returning to Christ. Subject to this proviso, whatever develops union of any kind is to be hailed.

#### PRESBYTERIAN UNION

As Presbyterians, we rejoice that our own uniting time has come. Reaping fruits already from the recent memorable Union in the north, we are told how this past year has proved quite



an *annus mirabilis* of Presbyterian Unions—what with the great one in Australia, coincident happily in time and area with the newly federated Commonwealth there; or in New Zealand, where the crown has been put on the last possible Presbyterian Union in a British colony; or in the Swiss Cantons, in Brazil, in Manchuria, and not least now “The Church of Christ in India, Presbyterian.” These things will tell at home here on English ecclesiastical movements, where Presbyterian ideals are being more observed and noted than ever. We have seen this already in Methodism, and now there are signs of a kindred leavening among Anglicans and Congregationalists. To these communions we ourselves owe many obligations, and are far from grudging advantages in return. What Anglicanism requires is a broadening out of its powers, and Congregationalism a tightening or gathering of them up. Devolution is the process in the one case; involution of the other; and both in a Presbyterianising direction.

The Crown is the supreme court of appeal for the Church of England in all questions of doctrine, ritual and discipline, and owing to the confused state of canon and church law, the Privy Council decisions have much legislative as well as judicial force. As for the Convoca-

tions, they are wittily described as "nouns of multitude, signifying many but not signifying much," for neither their resolutions nor those of the Houses of Laymen have any binding force whatever on the Church. The cry, therefore, is for more powers and more real lay representation, after the manner of Presbyterian Assemblies, with a free hand for the Church to manage its own affairs. Never did the spirit and working of Presbyterianism stand so high with English churchmen, though they seem hardly aware with what great price they must obtain such freedom and autonomy.

As regards Dr Parker's bold proposal to federate Congregationalism and call it the United Congregational Church, we note with sympathetic interest the discussions to which it has given rise, nothing doubting that our brethren will work out some method of strengthening the constitution of their Union and secure some desirable advantages further for both ministers and people.

#### THE WIDER UNITY

But, however much the members of this Synod may prize Presbyterian or other ecclesiastical union, no one here is likely to confound that with the unity of the body of Christ.

There may be much visible or formal unity of various kinds in any single church or organisation of churches, and yet little of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. As a matter of fact Christ's Church exists already in unity with Him; and so far as His members are sanctified they are all one in Him already, one in their aims, prayers, praises, spirit, and disposition. The things in which they are agreed are far greater, both in number and importance, than the things in which they differ. But what is needed is a manifest evidencing of this on their part, so as to give such an overwhelming and undeniable demonstration of it that the world may see and own it, and the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped. This manifestation of unity does not require any denial, still less any ignoring or suppressing of existing lawful differences or distinctions; only no undue exalting of them, and nothing done through strife or vain glory, and nothing to obscure or minimise the grander things of weightier moment. Oh! for a wave of such self-manifesting unity in the spirit and power of our Lord's own saving and missionary service at home and abroad. Happily the "Evangelical Free Church Catechism," which we owe chiefly to the pen of our own Principal Dykes, but to which the special committees of Congrega-

tionalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, whether Wesleyan, New Connexion, Primitive, United Free and Bible Christians have set their seal, defines the Church of Christ as "that Holy Society of believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit; so that though made up of many communions organised in various modes and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in Him—the essential mark of a true branch of the Catholic Church being the presence of Christ through His indwelling Spirit, manifested in holy life and fellowship."

An Eolian harp of various strings may wake divinest harmony, if but the breath of heaven blow upon it. The New Puritanism, one in its innermost self, though diverse in its outward strings, with a unity rich in variety and a variety blending in fullest harmony, but with nothing of a loveless, heartless, isolating uniformity, may wake ethereal sounds of ravishing music and cause even an indifferent world to pause and listen. Be it ours to keep our own part of this harp in order, rightly tuned and ready set in the window of God's holy Zion! Then, oh, for a breath of God's own Spirit to blow upon it, and the New Puritanism may far outrival the old, and with its different strings in unison,

“According well,  
May make one music as before  
But vaster.”

Which may God, of His great mercy to us,  
increasingly grant, through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. Amen.

## II

### PURITANISM AND ART<sup>1</sup>

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—By the good hand of God upon us, the labours of another Synod have come to a close. If there has been nothing exciting in its procedure, all things have been done in charity. With special thankfulness I have to acknowledge the indulgence and consideration extended to myself: and because of the spirit of peace and brotherly kindness characterising the deliberations, I cannot but think that some advantage may accrue from them to the Church in years to come. With little to remark upon arising directly out of the Synod's business, I would embrace the opportunity suggested by the launching of the permanent Building Fund, with its arrangements for more handsomely starting and more tastefully equipping of new churches, to add a few remarks along the line of the opening address, and especially to correct some misconceptions regarding Puritanism in relation to art and

<sup>1</sup> Synod Closing Address.



æsthetic culture. A prevailing but largely mistaken notion, fostered by ancient prejudice and strengthened by frequent repetitions, is that Puritanism has been not only unfavourable, but positively inimical to the fine arts in general and to tasteful architecture in particular. But this is partly misapprehension and partly exaggeration, as I propose now to show.

#### THE PRIMARY MISSION OF PURITANISM

True, the primary mission of Puritanism was a religious, not an æsthetic one. It sought its realisation not in art but in human character; not in architectural structures but in living temples of the Holy Ghost. It preferred, as Philip Henry would say, "Wheat in a barn" to "Chaff in a church;" a fellowship of living souls to a mausoleum of dead stones, however richly carved and set. Yet we may remind ourselves and others that it was not the Puritan Oliver Cromwell but the other one, Thomas Cromwell, in conjunction with his liege-lord, the first royal head of the Church of England, who tore down and dismantled the abbeys and other masterpieces of mediæval art, and strewed the country with their ruins. Nor was it the Puritans that were guilty of plastering with stucco and whitewash the ancient Norman

fanés and cutting and carving and maltreating the fine old parish churches in the Georgian era, long after the Puritans had been ejected from them. We do not pretend that the Puritans were ardent votaries of æstheticism. That was neither their forte nor their foible. Their religion was not at all dependent on any such auxiliary aids. But, even if their moral rigour and anti-ceremonial spirit seemed in themselves for a time unfavourable to a generous development of art, there were other aspects of their movement highly favourable to true art which have not been sufficiently considered.

#### LIKE THE EARLY CHURCH IN ART

Their position was something like that of the early Christians. As long as the life and death struggle with Paganism had to be upheld, the relation of Christianity to the very highest art and architecture could not but seem hostile. The hostility in either case was not, however, to art, but to the prostitution and moral debasement of it. So, as centuries rolled on, the Church became the guardian and patron of a Christianised art! Yet even that degenerated and became depraved in its standards, and was dragged down to serve the ends of ecclesiastical

ambition, or was kept wholly in ecclesiastical leading-strings, to its real damage and enslavement. Puritanism, whatever its faults and shortcomings, if it has had few opportunities of patronising costly art, has at least never debauched nor corrupted it; never underestimated its place and value, nor regarded it as a mere ornamental fringe to gaudy ritual or a self-indulgent plaything and amusement in life. In a world like ours, with so much to depress and sadden, it were a misfortune not to keep open every avenue that might enlarge and elevate existence. But Puritanism discerned with clear eye that whatever would truly brighten life must also purify and ennoble it to men. Hence its jealousy to guard from contamination the high vocation and genius of the artist, and to secure that intense and lofty ideals be cherished and cultivated, if art was to be a real and true blessing to men. And if Puritanism showed tendencies to the squalid and bare, it was at least never mean nor sordid. The critics should, in fairness, remember it was but little endowed with worldly wealth; was only a very short time in the ascendant, during which it did handsome things architecturally with the public money; that for the most part it was struggling for bare subsistence, when it had to attend

to first things first; and that it was necessity, not choice, that doomed it to mere whitewashed walls or pantiled roofs.

It ill becomes those, therefore, who closed against it the doors of universities and deprived it of the means of learning and self-culture, to sneer at its humble tastes or contemptuously complain of its non-æsthetic life. As the Frenchman Douet said about the great Huguenot, Goudimel, the founder of modern music, who perished in the St Bartholomew Massacre, "They killed with their own hands the nightingale, and then audaciously complained of the silence of the grove."

#### SEPARATE LIFE-SPHERES OF RELIGION AND ART

Religion and art have each a life-sphere of their own: that is to say, religion does not rise when art rises, for it is not dependent on it, nor does it grow from the same root. On the other hand, religion has been an inspiring motive of the highest masterpieces in every branch of art, and they who have most ministered to the religious spirit, and had the stimulus of its lofty thoughts and associations, have created some of the finest, most impressive, and most lasting effects.

It is a distinguished philosopher who reminds

us, that no art, however lofty and beautiful, can ever be the final expression of what is the most characteristic essence of religion in its higher reaches, namely, the invisible and spiritual. And another distinguished philosopher declares that while religion in its lower stages loses itself in æsthetic forms, and engages in its service not merely music and architecture, but painting and sculpture, as well as the dance and the drama, yet as it rises towards spiritual maturity it dispenses with these ladders. It abstains from such stimulants lest it should be intoxicated with what is sensuous, and devotes itself to the quickening of purely spiritual emotions. To this very advanced stage of spiritual development did Puritanism reach forth.

The Puritan was jealous, therefore, of the sensuous in worship, for his religion was intensely, not to say abnormally, spiritual. A lower reach with lower aims in religion more readily adapts itself to a sensuous vehicle of expressing itself; the danger, however, in that case being that it smothers the divine in the carnal element, the invisible in the visible, the spiritual in the external, creating an artificial, factitious, and traditional symbolism which easily diverts the mind from the highest essence of the spiritual, and clogs

it by attempting to sanctify what is really sacred in itself.

#### THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF PURITANISM

But Puritanism, like early Christianity, conceived better than it thought, and, after all, "it hitched its waggon to the stars;" so that, while its intense inwardness caused it easily to avoid, even despise, the use of outward aids and forms, the very intensity of such absorption finds, inevitably, certain outward vehicles of expression all its own for its self-realisation. Of this we have proof and evidence enough in various directions. Continental, if not English, critics have frankly recognised and highly appraised the Puritan strain that has entered, for example, into some of our loftiest literature. Among these finest creations, at once interpretive of and inexplicable apart from the Puritan spirit and influence, are Edmund Spenser's "Faerie Queene," John Milton's "Comus," "Samson Agonistes," "Paradise Lost and Regained," and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the most perfect prose epic of the English Hebraistic style, apart from the Puritan or *Geneva* version of the Bible—a version which, as one of our own brethren has pretty clearly demonstrated, was among the most powerful moulding influences on Shakespeare himself. Nor is its



creative genius and aptitude yet at an end—indeed only beginning—with Browning for its latest preacher and exponent, and John Ruskin as defender of some of its most characteristic ideas, simplicity, dignity, and conscience in all art, with the material not smothering the spiritual, but with the spiritual pouring itself into and sanctifying the material.

#### AN ART AND STYLE OF ITS OWN

Give it time and the new Puritanism will develop an art, style and life of its own, and of no mean order. It is especially fitted to do service in getting British industry to grow into alliance with British art, and to get the British artisan and the British artist to join hands together for the elevation of the general taste. But a mere casual gazing at picture galleries of a Sunday afternoon will not do much in this direction. If horny-handed labour is to be cheered and guided, it must be by far higher, more thoroughgoing, and less petty and paltry inspirations than this. There have been times in our nation's history when life and labour have been largely divorced from beauty; and Puritanism, in common with other forms of religious life, cannot be acquitted of forgetting that the God it worshipped, besides being absolute righteousness and truth, is no less

absolute love and beauty, and that worship and service of Him must be pervaded throughout by one and all of these elements. For we are made to see and admire the beautiful; and beauty exists in such wondrous variety: beauty of form, colour, sound, motion, and, above all, of expression in the human face divine. Yet to catch an insight into even the open beauties of nature demands much study and culture; and the higher the beauty the harder is it to realise. A child may appreciate the beauty of a piece of fruit or a gaudy bit of dress; but, set a picture that may be a miracle of artistic genius before a savage, and its chief beauty in his eyes may be its fitness to light his fire. Now the highest inspiration of which the human soul is capable is the inspiration of worship, and that is to behold the beauty of the Lord: not the beauty of architecture, or music, or oratory, of priestly attire or of graceful genuflections, but the very beauty of the Lord Himself: the beauty of His holiness. This alone is fadeless and eternal, a beauty that never was on sea or shore. And it is out of Zion that the Lord, the perfection of beauty, shines. Oh! for us to catch a glimpse of that beauty, so transfiguring and transforming, changing us into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God thus be upon us! *Then* will He establish the work of our hands upon us. Yea, the work of our hands He will establish it.”

### III

## A CONCIO AD CLERUM

### IS THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY A PROPITIATORY PRIESTHOOD ?

IN settling the "ordinal" or "ordination service" for the reformed English Prayer-book a very significant alteration was effected. Before that time, authority was given to those ordained as "priests" to "offer sacrifices to God and celebrate masses for the living and dead," or as otherwise expressed, "to offer *propitiatory sacrifices* for the sins of the people to Almighty God." All this was entirely swept away from the new ordination service. The word "Priest" was, however, retained, not only in common parlance, but also in the Prayer-book and in other public documents as the ordinary name for the parish minister. Immense confusion has hence arisen, because "Priest" in English is so ambiguous. It is presbyter *writ small*, in which case it should properly be spelled *Prest*, and it is also the word by which the Latin *sacerdos* or *sacrificer for sin* is

rendered in English. Of this ambiguity, Sacerdotalists readily avail themselves: and if we turn to the Thirty-nine Articles, it looks as if the compilers themselves had intended a like ambiguity. For in Articles 32 and 36 they render "Presbyter" by "Priest," and in Article 31 they render the Romish "Sacerdos" by "Priest" also.

It has, however, to be admitted by Sacerdotalists that their position under Queen Elizabeth would have involved them in high treason—the Act of 1580 providing that "All persons whatsoever which shall persuade or withdraw any of the Queen's subjects from the religion *now by her highness's authority established* within her dominions, . . . shall be to all intents adjudged traitors": while "every person who shall say or sing mass shall be committed to prison for the space of one year and pay the sum of two hundred marks." They have also to admit that the term "priest" is never applied to a Christian minister in the New Testament;<sup>1</sup> and that the Apostles did not conduct their work to outward seeming in priestly fashion. They proclaimed themselves preachers, never priests; ambassadors of Christ,

<sup>1</sup> See this amply demonstrated, in (for example) Lightfoot's *Com. on Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 186, 264, and his *Essay on The Christian Ministry* in the same vol.; and Bannerman's *Scripture Doctrine of the Church*, p. 577.

beseeching men in Christ's stead "be ye reconciled to God," not confession-mongers purveying grace. To the alarmed and convicted jailor of Philippi, for example, they do not say, "Kneel down and confess to us, do penance and receive absolution from God's priests," and the like. No! their word is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." How then do Anglican priests proceed in making out their sacerdotal claims? It is said by one, "Does not God lead us to expect certain great blessings pertaining to salvation, not directly, but indirectly through the means of grace which He has Himself established and of which means He ordains certain of our fellow-creatures to be the administrators? . . . If God assigned to His New Testament ministers that they should dispense the benefits of His Atonement either by preaching or by sacraments, then these New Testament ministers are in reality just as much 'priests' as were any Jewish priests." This is a fair specimen of the weak and groundless analogies on which the sacerdotal claims are attempted to be bolstered up. But how ignorant and sophistical is such a plea! "To dispense the benefits of an atonement" is an odd phrase; but to do so was *not* the characteristic work of



a priest at all; a Levite could do it. But a Levite was not a priest, as the sacerdotal writer ignorantly assumes, though the story of Korah alone should have taught him better. The one distinctive thing of the priest's work which it was sacrilege for Levite or for layman to assume was to minister *unto God* in the sin-offering, or as it is usually expressed, "Minister *unto Me* in the priests' office," or "the priests are consecrated to burn incense *unto the Lord*" or "to offer *unto Me*," or "every high-priest is ordained *for* men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and *sacrifices for sin*." Priests' work, therefore, was not to minister or dispense the things of God *to* men, but to minister *for* men to God. The former they no doubt could do; they could bless, teach, and the like, just as Levites, prophets, kings, and others officially could; but the thing *they alone* could do and which constituted their priestly prerogative was offering sin-offering and entering into God's presence as representatives of sinners to God. And no man could be a priest unless his father had been a priest before him. It was a lineally inherited office. Roman and Anglican priests are therefore not like Jewish priests in these respects at all; they neither do a kindred work nor hold a kindred position. For they might

dispense the benefits of atonement by preaching, or sacrament, or otherwise to the people; but this was not what made a man a "priest" in Israel at all. As if secretly conscious of this, they proceed to advance other claims to priesthood, which are, however, equally futile. Some of these claims are based on the universal priesthood of believers; some on the distinctive priesthood of Jesus Christ Himself—these being confessedly the only two priest-hoods of the New Testament apart from the Aaronic or Old Testament priesthood.

Now, as regards the former, all agree that it belongs to all Christian people as genuine spiritual priests, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and these consist of "our bodies" and of various "gifts," as of time or money, not needing any visible altar to lay them on; also eucharistic "sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving," of "alms-gifts," and "to do good and communicate, forget not, for with *such sacrifices* God is well-pleased." But it is suggested in the interests of the sacerdotal claim, that just as there was a class or caste of priests among the Jews, although the whole of the people were "a nation of priests," so while priesthood is a common heritage of all believers, there may be an official body

of representative priests, the clergy of the Church.

There *may* be, just as anything may be that is not a self-contradiction; but that a thing *may* be is a very small step to show what *is*. For those who are representatives of a spiritual priesthood are, of course, nothing more nor less than spiritual priests themselves; and this does nothing to make them propitiatory priests in any sense whatever. For they cannot be propitiating priests if those they represent are not so themselves.

Still it is urged that they are entrusted with the power of absolution, or at least of pronouncing absolution, and they foolishly rush to the groundless conclusion that this is a sacerdotal function, and they are never tired of repeating the commission to the apostles: "Whose sins soever ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose sins soever ye retain they are retained." Now, to pronounce and declare absolution is not a priestly or sacerdotal function at all. It is notorious, and has to be allowed by sacerdotal claimants, that no priest of the order of Aaron ever exercised any such function, and for the simple reason that it was not part of their priestly vocation. God forgives and absolves from sin just as He blesses, not as a priest, but as *a king*: and "we forgive

them that trespass against us," and "we bless them that curse us," in the same royal capacity as "kings unto God." In their eagerness to make points, our sacerdotal friends write often as if they forgot not only the universal priesthood of believers, but their universal kingship and prophethood as well. Sin against God can, of course, only be forgiven by God Himself of His kingly grace: and it was under this claim Christ said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and He proved His claim by equally saying with effective power, "Take up thy bed and walk." But to declare or pronounce absolution and divine forgiveness is not the work of a priest at all, and indeed the very opposite. It is the work of a divine ambassador or prophet, *forthtelling* the mind and will of God to men; in short, of a preacher of salvation for the remission of sins. A priest's work is *for men to God*, a preacher's is *for God to men*, and declaring or pronouncing absolution to men is part of the latter function, not of the former.

Driven, therefore, from the claim based on the universal priesthood of believers, Sacerdotalists boldly claim a share in the very priesthood of Christ Himself, repeating in fact what He, as priest, did or is now doing. This is a very solemn and awful claim, of being not

a spiritual but a really propitiating priesthood. It is, however, a useless claim, and is purely pagan in its conception. In Christ's priesthood there is *no need* for them, *no room* for them, and *no work* for them to do, as propitiating priests.

*No need for them.* Perfection, completeness, finality, are the characteristics of Christ's propitiatory sacerdotal work. *They* say there is a need to offer up sacrifice for sin continually; the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews insists that "our high-priest needeth not daily; this He did once for all in offering up of Himself."

*No room for them.* Because Christ's priesthood, unlike the Aaronic, was "unchangeable," or rather "untransferable," and, like Melchizedek's, incapable of passing by succession or transmission. And very interesting it is to find in one of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets a confirmation of the priest-kings of Salem being elective not transmissive; severely personal and not by succession at all. The whole propitiatory service of Christ's priesthood is confined wholly to His own person.

*No work for them to do.* Very fondly would they like to think of themselves as imitating and carrying on in the Church Christ's work in heaven. But, alas, for their claim! There was no altar in the Holy of Holies, nor is Christ

now doing any altar work in heaven. Yet they do make the claim that their priesthood is just exactly Christ's own priesthood : and whatever Christ claims to do, they claim authority to do in His name. If He say, "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,"<sup>1</sup> they insist on having this very power. But surely all such claimants may in common fairness be asked to produce the needful credentials for such a claim. Jesus Himself did not resent such a challenge. "How can we *know* that you are a rightful claimant of such a divine prerogative? Such an honour is easily snatched, but not so easily justified. What *proof* do you give of such a claim?" asked those around. Jesus at once afforded decisive evidence. "Whether is easier to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? But that ye may *know* that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, He said to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee arise, and take up thy bed and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them all."<sup>2</sup> Has Christ then given them these delegated *credentials* of His as needful evidence? Yet they cling to the parallelism, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you";<sup>3</sup> or "As

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 1-8; Mark ii. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Luke v. 24-26.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 21.



Thou hast sent Me into the world so have I also sent them into the world.”<sup>1</sup>

But as He says He was sent “to give His life a ransom for many,” and they do not pretend to this as their mission, it is clear the parallel is in the *Authority* sending, not in the *objects* for which the sending is done. Now we have already seen that “remitting” or “retaining” sins, which means either *declaring* or *sealing* forgiveness, is not a priestly function at all; but is either a *declarative* act of a prophet or teacher, or a royal act, the prerogative of a king. Thus, as soon as people find out from the parallel passage in St Luke’s Gospel (xxiv. 33-37) that this power to “remit” and “retain” sins as recorded in St John xx. 22, 23, was spoken at a meeting not of the apostles only, but of the general body of disciples—where the two disciples from Emmaus “found the eleven gathered together and *them that were with them*,” they see that the whole fabric of exclusiveness in the promise falls to the ground. It is an ignorance of Scripture here, as on so many other occasions, that has led to this false assumption. As St Augustine, rightly interpreting the one gospel by the other, says “This promise in St John is addressed *to all believers everywhere*.” Even

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 18.

Dr Pusey (on *Absolution*) allows that "the words look every way and may include all forgiveness whenever and wheresoever any sins are remitted through the agency of men." We must also remember that for twelve centuries these words were never used anywhere in the ordination of any Christian ministry. They form no part of the ordination service of the Eastern Church; and they nowhere appear in any ordinal service of the Latin Church till the thirteenth century. The very basis of a priesthood, as set forth by the Council of Trent, is dependent on a theory that is known now to be historically false. It declares that it was at the Lord's table Christ "constituted the apostles priests of the New Testament, and by these words, *Do this in remembrance of Me*, He commanded them and their successors to offer them in sacrifice, even as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught." This last statement is notoriously contrary to fact. Germs of the idea may have appeared in the fifth century—not earlier—but the Romish Church taught no such doctrine or usage before the Lateran Council of 1215. The suggestion is equally groundless that there was first the doctrine of a propitiatory sacrifice in the ordinance; and out of this grew necessarily the priesthood. The contrary is the

historic reality. Not till the eighth century is there any hint of the mass being regarded *anywhere* as a propitiatory sacrifice, whereas the notion of the ministry being a priesthood was firmly rooted in the fourth century, and it was this that gave rise to the felt need for "something to offer." Tertullian first applied priestly words to the Christian ministry; but Bishop Lightfoot truly declares, "As Cyprian crowned the edifice of the Episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise the sacerdotal claims; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."<sup>1</sup>

Greatest efforts are put forth to show that there is something in the Lord's Supper of the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice which only priests can effectively offer. The alleged "Sacrifice of the Mass" is thus the last fortress, the central citadel of high Anglo-Catholic claim and contention. If this fall, all falls; if this go, all goes. Here is concentrated, therefore, the whole passionate pleading and intense energy of earnest but, in many respects, misguided men.

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Ministry* in his *Com. on Philippians*, pp. 255-59.

The theory is founded on the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It not only makes an altar of the Communion table, but it insists on adoration of the Host ; it sees in the Lord's Supper, not so much a eucharistic feast as a propitiatory sacrifice alike for the living and the dead. This whole idea of the Sacrifice of the Mass is based on the dogma of Transubstantiation, without which it could never have been invented. For the theory of it is that the officiating priest offers up to God the real body and blood of Christ corporeally and carnally present by virtue of the words of priestly consecration, and that this is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of those on whose behalf it is offered. If, then, the body and blood of Christ be not actually on the altar, it is clear they cannot be offered up, though, of course, it does not follow that, even if there be a transubstantiation, there is a propitiatory sacrifice with it. The Council of Trent thus defines Transubstantiation and all that is involved in it. "If any one shall deny that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist there are contained truly, really, and substantially the body and the blood, together *with the soul and divinity* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore whole Christ, and shall say that He is in it only by sign, or figure, or influence,

let him be accursed." (Canon I. on the Eucharist.)

"If any one shall say that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist there remains the substance of bread and wine along with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny the wonderful and singular conversion of the whole of the substance of the bread into the body, and the whole of the substance of the wine into the blood, there remaining only the appearance of bread and wine, which conversion the Catholic Church most appropriately calls Transubstantiation, let him be accursed." (Canon II. on the Eucharist.)

"It is therefore indubitable that all true Christians, according to the practice of the Catholic Church, are bound to venerate this most holy sacrament, and to render to it *the worship of latria which is due to the true God*. Nor is it the less to be worshipped that it was instituted by Christ the Lord as has been stated; for we believe the same God to be present in it, of whom the Eternal Father, when He introduces Him into the world, thus speaks, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'" (Chap. V. on the Eucharist.)

Finally, "The Holy Council teaches that this sacrifice is really propitiatory and made by Christ Himself. . . . Assuredly God is ap-

peased by this oblation, and grants grace and the gift of penitence, and discharges the greatest crimes and iniquities. For it is one and the same sacrifice which is now offered by the priests, and which was offered by Christ upon the cross, only the mode of offering is different. . . . Wherefore it is rightly offered according to the tradition of the apostles not only for the sins, punishments, and other necessities of living believers, but also for the dead in Christ who are not yet completely purified." (Chap. II. on the Sacrifice of the Mass.)

The Catechism of the Council of Trent devotes a long chapter of 87 sections to the "Sacrament of the Eucharist," and in section 46 it sets forth why in the elements all the senses are contradicted: "For since food of human flesh is most strongly abhorrent to the common nature of men or to feed on a draught of blood, He has most wisely ordained that His most holy body and blood should be administered to us under the appearances of bread and wine. Two advantages follow: (*a*) We are saved from the calumnies of infidels, which we could not easily avoid if we were seen to eat the Lord under His own proper appearance; and (*b*) this contradiction of the senses is of greatest efficacy in increasing faith in our souls."



What painful conclusions follow from this comparatively recent and purely mediæval doctrine of Transubstantiation; what superstitious and idolatrous usages it necessitates, and what positive self-contradictions it involves, we may not here insist on at length. We do well, however, to remember that this has been in the Romish Church the great fire and faggot doctrine, for the denial of which more Christians have been put to death than for all other articles of religion whatsoever. We do well also to think of its patent self-contradictions. To the question, "Are bones, sinews, and whatsoever pertains to man's natural body really present in the Body and Blood on the altar, as well as the divinity or Godhead of Christ?" the Catechism of the Council of course answers "Yes." And yet the presence of Christ is equally declared a "spiritual presence," meaning, as the "Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster" expound it,<sup>1</sup> the body on the altar is the spiritual or resurrection body "delivered from many of the limitations to which a material body is naturally subject." Can the absurdities of self-contradiction go further? Christ's body on the altar the very body Christ wore on the cross! Yet no! for

<sup>1</sup> In their recent vindication of the Bull *Apostolicæ curæ*, p. 24 (their Letter on *Anglican orders*).

it is the body with the qualities of His resurrection body at the self-same time. It is the body with the blood separated from it. Yet no! for the consecrated wafer contains the body and *blood* as well as the whole divinity of our Lord.

Now there is no trace of any theory of Transubstantiation before the ninth century, whatever mystical ideas may have been previously entertained; and it was never set forth by public authority till the Lateran Council in 1215.

It must not be confounded with the real presence, which no intelligent Protestant denies, the question being not as to the *reality* but the *mode* of Christ's presence—being in the one view a bodily presence, in the other a real though spiritual presence with the worthy receivers, as in other Divine ordinances. We need not discuss the matter here beyond reminding ourselves that if Christ's words, "This is My body," means "This *represents* My body," there is really less departure from the literal sense than "This *is changed* into My body," which necessitates Christ having two bodies, the one in which He spoke and the one in His hand; also that "This cup is the New Testament" would then mean "This cup is transubstantiated into the New Testament," besides involving all those offensive and shocking con-

tingencies should the consecrated Host of the body and blood disappear by accident, or be eaten by a mouse or other animal, or be subjected to kindred profanations.

The most Protestant declaration in the Prayer Book is that at the close of the Communion Service, known, by those who hate it, as *The Black Rubric*, which determines that in kneeling at the Communion "no adoration is intended or ought to be done either to the sacramental bread and wine or any corporeal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood." Those who drew up that revised Prayer Book believed the Mass to be idolatry. There is certainly no record of any such worship in any part of the Church for many a century, and it has no foothold in the Catholic formula, *quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus*. The most recent high Anglo-Catholic usage, however, seems to be to pick and choose each for himself anything that has anywhere and at any time been practised!

Those who have no great liking for Scripture usually are found, however, very ready to make their appeal to it, when it seems to have anything whatever in their favour. So it is in the present case. "Is it not written," they ask, "we have an altar?" and they leap to the conclusion that this must refer to the Com-

munion table. Any intelligent reader, however, of that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 10) can see that, as under the old Economy, there was but one altar allowed, just as there was one high priest and one sacrifice of atonement in the year, so under the new covenant we need but one High Priest for ever, and only *one* altar and one atoning sacrifice. What a travesty to read it: "We have thousands of altars in Christ's Church as many as we have Communion tables—one or more in every church building!" The passage means, of course, that we too in the new economy have an altar of that sort in the old economy, of which no one could eat under penalty of death. That was the altar of expiation, where the propitiatory sacrifice or sacrifice for sin was offered; and no one, be he priest or any other, durst eat of that. If, therefore, the Lord's Supper were a propitiatory sacrifice or sacrifice for sin, it would be wholly unlawful to eat of it at all—a rather startling result of the ritualistic style of exposition. Surely they are not aware of there having been three different classes of sacrifice in the Jewish Church: a *propitiatory* sacrifice for sin, which *durst not* be eaten at the altar; a *dedicatory* sacrifice for self-surrender, which was entirely consumed by fire, a whole burnt-offering which *could not* be eaten; and a

*eucharistic* sacrifice for feasting, which was the sacrificial meal and which *had to be* eaten by the offerers or worshippers.

The idea of the first was *expiation* of sin ; of the second, *consecration* to service ; and of the third, a festival of peace, joy, and thanks. Of this last kind is the Lord's Supper ; and no harm would come of calling it a sacrifice, provided we think of it as like "the sacrifice of praise," not a sacrifice of propitiation for sin, but of peace, and joy, and thanksgiving, not offered by a propitiating priest, but by the communicants themselves, "the spiritual priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ, giving praise to His name." So we know that Christ our Passover is sacrificed on our behalf ; and truly so, although the Paschal lamb was not a propitiation nor sacrifice for sin, because it was eaten, and was not laid on an altar but as food on a table ; not requiring any propitiating priest but slain by "the nation of priests," and in fact instituted before any officiating and propitiating priesthood had come into existence. Even the slaying of the Paschal lamb was not an altar service at all, much less was the eating of it ; and, as a matter of fact, the Lord's Supper resembled the ceremonial of the Paschal Supper, and being instituted in the midst of it, was designed to take its place and

supplant it. Still there are those who hazard the suggestion that the words of institution: "This do in remembrance of Me," may possibly admit of being translated, "offer this for my memorial." No one, however, with any character for scholarship to lose would do this, knowing well, that the word for "a memorial," or something external to a person, is quite a different one from that here used and rightly rendered "in remembrance," being the word for a *mental act*. Besides, it serves no purpose. For, while the word "memorial" occurs in connection with sacrifice in the Old Testament, it is only with the *burnt-offering*, never at all with the *sin-offering*. And curiously enough a priest at the Mass never does anything resembling or corresponding to either what the priest making propitiation for sin did of old, nor what Christ did on the cross or is doing in heaven, where He never offers any "memorial" of His sin-expiating work. He makes now "no more offering for sin"; and any priest who affects to do so is not now in any way imitating Christ at all. There remains, therefore, only the awful theory, which some Romish and other priests do not shrink from asserting, that they are doing over again Christ's own propitiatory sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of the Mass is the very same sacrifice as of the Cross, while yet



it is not the same, for they say it is an "*unbloody* sacrifice," by way of distinction. And the strangest thing of all is that none of those who profess to be habitually offering up Christ as a sin-offering to God, can tell—they are all puzzled to say—at what time or by what act or acts the sacrifice is offered. Whether it is in the consecrating, or in the lifting up for adoration, or in the distributing, whether in any or all or none of these acts the propitiation is made, they cannot say: for certainly they neither do nor say anything that at all in the least degree resembles the making of a propitiation.

Yet the danger will always remain, so long as the Lord's Communion table is spoken of as an altar. In the first English Prayer Book of 1549, the word "altar" was consistently enough used, because "the Sacrifice of the Mass" was retained in it, though in a modified form. But the word was entirely dropped in the second and later Prayer Books: so that in the Communion Service it is "table," "holy table" or "Lord's Table," and never once "altar" at all. For when Cranmer and Ridley got to know that Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass were comparatively recent corruptions (as they were led to see from John Scotus's famous treatise, commonly but mistakenly called "the book of Bertram" and the no

less famous Saxon Homily by Aelfric of Malmesbury against the Monk of Corby's defence of the newly-broached dogma of Transubstantiation) the altars were removed by Ridley, and Cranmer wrote in 1550 the elaborate treatise which created so tremendous a sensation "*Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament.*" Hence for at least eighty years, no altars and no altar rail, and no kneeling communicants, were known in the Church of England! By the Canon of 1603-4 the table was to remain at the east end altar-wise when *not in use*; but when needed for Communion it was to be *brought out* and set where communicants could best see and hear. It was Laud and his suffragans who lawlessly set aside the terms of the Canon, and, under a plea of decency and decorum made the table remain always as an altar raised up by steps and enclosed by railings, and it was this that aroused such ferment and agitation over the land—similar to what we are seeing and hearing in our own day. Certainly there is the greatest perversion and abuse in thinking of the Lord's Table as an altar, neither the word "altar" nor any altar language being ever applied to it in Scripture from first to last. How truly does Cranmer say in the "preface to the reader" to his noble "*Defence*

*of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*": "What availeth it to take away beads, pardons, pilgrimages and such like popery so long as two chief roots remain unpulled up? Whereof, so long as they remain, will spring again all former impediments of the Lord's harvest and corruption of His flock. The rest is but branches and leaves, the cutting away whereof is but topping and lopping of a tree, or cutting down of woods, leaving the body standing and the roots in the ground; but the very body of the tree, or rather the roots of the weeds, is the popish doctrine of Transubstantiation, the real presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament of the *altar* (as they call it): and of the sacrifice and oblation of Christ made by the priest for the salvation of the quick and the dead. *Which roots if they be suffered to grow in the Lord's vineyard, they will overspread all the ground again with the old errors and superstitions.*"

## IV

### AT A CHURCH OPENING

"One thing have I been desiring of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."—PSALM xxvii. 4.

THE Church of God may be regarded as the great subject of this verse. We may at least find in its language an appropriate vehicle of pious sentiment respecting that Divine Institution, especially in some aspects of it with which we are at present more immediately concerned.

Here we have a good and godly man—a type of all the good and godly—breathing forth his loyal-hearted attachment to all that constituted for him the Church of the living God. Here we find him expressing his anxious solicitude to participate in its fellowship and ordinances : his cordial appreciation of its value and use : his public-spirited interest in its affairs and his dutiful recognition of its superior claims.

Now as it is under pressure that the

strongest and most characteristic perfume exudes from an odoriferous plant, so we find the richest effusions of the Psalmist's spiritual desires drawn forth from him under circumstances of a trying kind. He seems in exile under the hand of his God, and the banishment is aggravated by enforced absence from the seat and scene of Divine solemnities, so dear to his heart. Whether written by David himself or penned by some later interpreter of David's mind is a matter of little moment; the psalm is a true exponent of the deepest desires of his highest nature. For attachment to the house of the Lord signalled David all through life. And now that he is cut off from its fellowships, the text sounds like the very sob of a wounded spirit, yearning after its proper abode. How characteristically he is here represented as craving, not for some theatre on which to display his martial prowess—man of war from his youth though he were: nor for the means of indulging his refined intellectual tastes—sweet singer of Israel though he were: nor for mingling in the splendours and attractions of the royal court—anointed king though he were. His longings go out after something higher, brighter and diviner far: to those religious fellowships and enjoyments which have caught up his better being

into a holy and happy unity, in short, to all that constituted and was associated in his mind with the Church of the living God. "*One thing* have I been desiring of the Lord and that will I be seeking after: that I may be dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to be beholding the beauty of the Lord, and to be enquiring in His temple." Here we have these three points.

I. WHAT the Psalmist is seeking and teaching us to seek: "To be dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

II. How he is seeking this and teaching us to seek and secure it. "*One thing* have I been *desiring and seeking after from the Lord.*"

III. WHY he is seeking this and teaching us so earnestly to seek it too: "*To be beholding the beauty of the Lord, enquiring in his Temple.*"

I. WHAT the Psalmist is seeking and teaching us to seek. "*To dwell in the house of the Lord* all the days of my life." This is quite a favourite expression with the Psalmist, and one very frequently recurring. Thus: "Blessed are they that *dwell in Thy house*, they will be still praising Thee." "Blessed is the man whom Thou choolest and causeth to approach unto Thee that he may *dwell in Thy house.*" Now, "to dwell in God's house" is of course much



more than to attend a place of worship, much more than to frequent the outward sanctuary and participate in its services (though all this is implied and included). It is a desire to be an inmate of God's redemption home ; to be a member of His family and a resident among His restored children. For the word "house" here signifies rather "household." As the Apostle Paul expounds it, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the saints and of *the household of God.*" It is to find oneself nestling peacefully and enjoyably within the precincts of His edifice of grace ; it is to have a name and a place among the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty ; to be a member of that true spiritual Church redeemed from among men, and comprising the whole family in heaven and earth which the Lord is "to present at last unto Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, holy and without blemish." So the Apostle Paul interprets this phrase for us when he declares, "the house of God" to be "the Church of the living God" ; and so we may well understand the closing words of the 23rd Psalm, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and *I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" Every other house

would the Psalmist outgrow! From every other he must go forth sooner or later! or be carried forth at last! But here he may abide all the days of his life; here he may find a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, from which there is no more going out from henceforth, even for ever.

What a noble and affecting conception of the Church! The house for the living God's own fixed abode, the seat and scene of all divine fellowship, the sphere of enduring family privileges and relationships, fitted to be a dwelling-place and home for the soul, from which it may never more go forth, either in this life or in the life to come. And this lofty ideal finds a certain measure of embodiment in what is currently called "the house of God," the outward sanctuary, the church, if by this much-abused and misapplied term we understand not so much the church-building or ecclesiastical organisation, but rather the divinely-appointed ordinances and fellowships which go to constitute its essence. The word rendered church, which occurs 115 times in the New Testament, always refers to a body of *persons* never to a *place* of worship, however naturally it got in the third century to be applied to the buildings which then came to be reared for Christian assemblies. But as it is written, "*Ye* are the

temple of the living God," stone and brick walls can only indicate the meeting ground of the saint and faithful with their Lord. For as Milton truly says :

"God attributes to *place* no sanctity  
If none be thither brought  
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell."

The building is but the seat and emblem of the spiritual something that can never be truly localised or confined by space.

We must be on our guard, therefore, against two opposite extremes that are apt to be subversive of the essential ideas and use of a church. We may *over-estimate*, or we may *under-estimate* its value. The one is the error of belated superstition ; the other that of sheer religious indifference. With the one, what they call "the Church" is apt to be everything : its ordinances, in their view of them, necessarily containing and conveying grace, and itself their altar, their sacrifice, their Saviour, and their all in all. On the other hand, there are those who seem to think that because the Church cannot do *everything* for them, it can do *nothing* for them ; and so, by their proud and self-sufficient intellectualism, it is apt to be underestimated or even habitually forsaken. We are to avoid both these extremes. The Church is in no sense to be to us the well-

spring of spiritual life, as the ecclesiastical votary is apt to suppose, though we may well deem it the region where that well-spring flows, as the graceless despiser of it is apt to forget. The ordinances of grace are not the same thing as the grace of ordinances ; and to dwell in the House of the Lord is not the same thing as to attend church and take part in its services, however useful this may be. No doubt the church is the place where God's name is honoured, His Word proclaimed, and His peculiar presence gained, or, as Lord Bacon says, " I have seen Thee in Thy works, have sought Thee in Thy Providences ; but I have found Thee and have felt Thee in Thy sanctuary." Yet we must never put the House of the Lord in the room of the lord of the house. Hence we are taught here :

II. How we are to seek and secure this high privilege of dwelling in the house (household) of the Lord. " One thing have *I desired of the Lord*, and that will I seek after." From the Lord alone therefore, from Him direct must come every spark of spiritual life, with all its benefits and all its privileges, right, and title of access to the household of God. Through Him and by Him *alone* we become individually inmates of this Divine family and home. The Church may proclaim the truth, may point the

way, may proffer the life, but it is the Lord's prerogative alone to say, "*I am* the way; *I am* the truth; *I am* the life." And so we feel that the man who speaks as the text suggests has been in no ordinary sense alone with his Lord to attain this privileged experience. All alone has he transacted with HIM the sublime matter of his soul's peace and salvation on a sphere of the individual conscience where none other (be it Church or priest) dare to intrude, without sacrilege and profanation. All alone in the recesses of his individual being has he been dealing personally with a personal Saviour. "One thing have I been desiring and seeking after from THE LORD." Through Him comes the right and title to be planted in the household of God: By Him comes the power and in Him the grace of immediate access to the life and blessed experiences of the children of God. "As many as received HIM, to them gave He the right, the power, the privilege to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is the Saviour alone that saves. In Him alone is life, and from Him alone it is derived with all its blessed relationships and benefits. No Church (use the word in whatever sense you

please) can ever avail to impart this life of grace. It can never ensure or magically achieve the elementary principles of vital Godliness, however full it may be of helps and incitements to their attainment. It may furnish an instrumental method of acquiring them, but we must seek the originative and efficient cause of them "from the Lord." Or to vary the figure, the Church can never raise the spiritually dead nor heal the spiritually sick. It cannot of itself open the blind eye nor unstop the deaf ear; its business is to hold forth the Divine prescription in its hand to explain, commend, and enforce its terms, while it points to Him who is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

To hold HIM up in all His claims and offices to be a pedestal on which HE may be raised before the eyes of men—*this* is the chief use and value of the house of God as the Church of the living God. If it do not this, its existence is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; but it cannot do more. Full of all helps toward Christ and pointing the way to Him, it must never come into His place nor usurp His functions. It is the glory of the "house of the Lord" to be the concentration of all those hallowed and hallowing influences which impel the soul towards the Lord Himself in all



His wooing, winning, and attractive power. And this it was what constituted its chief recommendation in the eyes of the Psalmist. For

III. WHY is he seeking thus to dwell in the house of the Lord, and WHY is he so earnestly desiring this boon and favour of the Lord?

Is it not as he says, "to behold the beauty of the Lord, by enquiring in His Temple"? The beauty of the Lord! of the Lord Himself! Not then the beauty of the building, however splendid its architecture; nor the beauty of ritual, however gorgeous; nor the beauty of vestments, postures, and decorations; nor the beauty of the music or the oratory; or such like externals; but the beauty of the Lord! A something higher, brighter, and diviner far than all that may attract the carnal eye. Not that we are to divorce the idea even of outward beauty from the house of the Lord! Not that we are to associate anything that is unbeautiful with the name and worship of the Lord. "He hath made everything beautiful in its season"; and you have done well to "beautify this house of the Lord," and to "make beautiful the place of My sanctuary." Beauty is set before us in so many and so varied orders, and we are all made to see and

in measure appreciate and admire these. God hath made such wondrous beauty in what multitudes of objects above, beneath, and around us: beauty of form, beauty of colour, beauty of sound, beauty of motion, beauty of expression; and what unspeakable beauty is lodged in the human face divine! But how much more difficult to grasp, the higher the beauty rises above us. Any child can appreciate the useful beauty of ripe and luscious fruit, or the glittering glory of richly-adorned dress. But place before a boor or a savage some picture, the high effort of genius, whose beauty is neither superficial nor obtrusive, and his untutored taste may only lead him to use its materials for his first purpose, the lighting of his fire, and miss the beauty of it altogether. If we would rise to the height of a fadeless and imperishable beauty—a beauty never seen on sea or shore—the uncreated beauty of the Lord Himself—ah! what desiring of the Lord, and what earnest enquiry in His temple must herald every glimpse of such a beauty, that may only be inwardly and spiritually discerned. And is it not “out of Zion that the Lord, the perfection of beauty, shines”? And “in His temple every one His beauty doth declare.”

A cottage is the artizan's abode; a mansion

house that of the wealthy nobleman; and a palace, that of a king. But a *Temple* is the dwelling-place of God the Lord; and the house of the Lord is dear to the Psalmist's heart, because to his trained and cultured spiritual taste it is the seat and sphere of the divinest beauty. It was this beauty he had learned to appreciate and yearn after. It was this that made his heart glad for "the house of the Lord, the Church of the living God." Yes; it is where the Lord's word directs, His spirit prompts, His ordinances quicken; where He Himself is honoured, His praises sung, and His glory sought; where the *Urim and Thummim*, the *lights and perfections* of His name and presence gleam forth, there to His waiting and enquiring ones His beauty is revealed in all its gladdening and transforming power. To a mere worldly heart, indeed, "There is no beauty in HIM that we should desire Him."

"No outward beauty shines in Him  
To draw the carnal eye":

but how are we ever to elevate our lower impulses and raise the pursuits and standards of life? how best escape its materialistic, its debasing and its hardening influences? how but by fondly cherishing this lofty aim, this yearning

after this one ideal, "to behold the beauty of the Lord, by enquiring in His temple." But ah! if the heart be estranged and alienated from this house of the Lord, and if men forget the assembling of themselves together for such a purpose, this divinest beauty will become to them, it is to be feared, but a melancholy hypothesis, and its very existence only a dreary and dubious perchance. Oh! to continue, therefore, now and for ever within the precincts of the Lord's own sacred and spiritual temple, making it a home and abode for the soul's best desires like the downy nest to the ruffled and storm-tossed bird; and always within gazing distance and fascinating vision of a fadeless and imperishable beauty—this is what it is to be *the true Churchman* after the type of him who teaches us to say, "One thing have I been desiring and seeking after from the Lord, that I may be dwelling all the days of my life in the household of God, to be beholding the beauty of the Lord, enquiring in His temple."

## V

### AT AN ORGAN OPENING

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise *ye* the Lord."—PSALM cl. 6.

THERE is no command more frequent in Scripture, no form of words that we find more often reiterated than, "Praise the Lord." In the six verses of this Psalm, the exhortation to praise occurs no fewer than thirteen times. This, no doubt, is an exceptional case; still, this privileged duty stands out, both here and elsewhere, with a commanding pre-eminence. So likewise is it with the resolution, "I will sing," or "I will give praise"; for no other resolution compares with this for frequency.

These considerations may perchance lead some to attach more importance than they have been in the habit of doing to this delightful part of worship both in public and private, and to give more heed to "the service of song in the house of the Lord," as a pleasant and valuable means of grace. Let us consider how.

I. *The Place of Praise in Worship.*  
Preaching, Prayer and Praise are the three

chief parts of Christian worship, together with the sacramental ordinances, the concentration of all the three. For what are Baptism and the Lord's Supper but the quintessence of all evangelical preaching, of all evangelical prayer, of all evangelical praise, or the giving of thanks? These three parts of worship share a nearly equal place in New Testament treatment. Looking dispassionately at the apostolic pattern of, and directions for, Divine service in God's house, may we not say that preaching (including in this the reading and use of the Word of God in the service) is held forth as the *fundamental*, prayer the *central*, and praise the *crowning* part of public worship of the sanctuary. Do they not stand related to each other very much as the foundation, the walls, and the roof of this church building, with the towering spire and other finials? For the primary or foundation part of worship is not—what we may say to God; but what He has to say to us. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak”: is not *that* the true spirit and first essential in all our worship? Out of this rises up the central, or devotional part of our worship: and that must be poor preaching and a poor use of the Word which does not issue in and promote the prayerful or devotional temper and frame of mind. Yet to many, preaching



hardly appears to come within the sphere or scope of worship at all. Many good folks who have been perhaps liturgically trained are apt to forget that the reception of God's message and the offering up of the soul's prayers and praises are complementary parts of Divine worship—a full service in the sanctuary including all these three means of grace together. Neither a prayer book nor a hymn book furnishes a perfect or complete exemplar of Christian worship, apart from the Word of God read and expounded.

Now praise, though neither the fundamental nor the central portion of worship, is the highest and the most abiding. The Church's worship culminates in praise. Here the Church in heaven and the Church on earth engage in the one function they have in common. They unite in the service of praise, which is the part of worship that shall never cease. Preaching and prayer belong to the Church on earth; but in heaven, "The saints for ever praise, for saints for ever love." For preaching makes its appeal to faith, and prayer to hope; but praise is the exponent and expression of love, which is "of all the graces, best." And as we say of these three sovereign graces, "Now abideth faith and hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love"; so we may say, "Now abideth

preaching, prayer, and praise, these three, but the greatest of these is praise." And the reason of this will be obvious if we keep in mind the special function of praise: "Whoso offereth praise *glorifieth Me!*"

Doubtless we aim at glorifying God in preaching and prayer; but we aim at this indirectly, and in connection with our own profit from them as means of grace for ourselves. In preaching or in reading from God's Holy Word we have immediate respect, for example, to our own spiritual enlightenment and edification, and in prayer we have regard to our own wants and the wants of others as weak and sinful creatures. In praise we are far from overlooking these human considerations, but it is emphatically by praise we rise above ourselves and our own environment; and in the highest reaches of praise we aim at times quite immediately and directly at "glorifying God" by our ascription and rendering of honour and dominion, majesty and greatness to His holy name. Is it not in such an exercise, is it not in "doxology," which is the highest and crowning act of worship, that we are led thus to forget our smaller selves and to reach up in lofty devotion to the offering of "blessing, and honour, and glory to Him which was and is and is to come, the Almighty?" Praise is the

soul's appropriate attitude when most under a sense of the Divine presence and graciousness. Then it is that God alone fills, or seems to fill, the whole horizon of our vision. We get lost in wonder, love, and praise ; we worship ; we adore. " We praise Thee, O God ; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord." We address Him directly in the second person ; and sing not only of Him, but making Him the subject of our praise, we sing also *to* Him and *for* Him, as if in His very presence and immediately before Him. Then we not merely praise Him in thanks for all He has been and is to ourselves and others, but for all that He is in Himself ; not only for His merciful doings and His saving relationships to us, but for His own inherent and essential attributes : " For the Lord is good ; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations. Praise Him in the firmament of His power ; praise Him according to His excellent greatness." And thus we can realise how truly it is said : " Whoso offereth praise, *glorifieth* Me,"

## II. *The Method of Praise in Worship.*

While praise is emphatically a God-glorifying exercise, it is none the less an important means of grace to ourselves. Primarily we sing praises unto God ; but no less we are permitted to sing and express in sacred song all the deep religious

thoughts and emotions of our nature, whether they be our aspirations, confessions, penitence, supplication, or kindred pious experiences, together with anything that might enter into prayer or preaching—all may find expression in our praises. Nothing is excluded whereby we may edify one another: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs";<sup>1</sup> "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

The two parts of praise are the music and the words, or voice and verse, these "twin harmonious sisters": music being measured or modulated sound, wedded and fitted to measured or modulated language. And so,

"Devotion borrows music's tone  
And music takes devotion's wing."

According to a law of sympathetic unisons, every mood of mind has a certain tone of voice to express it. Thus joy has one class of note, and sorrow another and very different one; and there is no mistaking the one for the other. The note expressive of hope will never be the same as that which is expressive of fear; nor can a funereal wail be ever mistaken for a

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 16.

marriage song. The shriek of pain is distinguished in a moment from the shout of mirth. It is the province of music to interpret and express the spirit and significance of what has to be sung; and being a kind of universal language, it has to suit the note to the word and the word to the note, and be sufficiently self-interpreting to reveal by the major or minor key the kind of sentiment that is being expressed. The words need not necessarily be metrical or in rhyme, provided they be rhythmical or with a poetic caste.

Hence it may be seen that we sing not only because we feel, but also in order to feel, and to feel more deeply. And singing is meant not only to help us to *express* our thoughts and emotions devotionally, but also may be used to *impress* upon us the singer's thoughts and emotions too. In other words, we may listen with spiritual edification to a solo, or an anthem, or a psalm sung by others as we listen to a sermon or other form of spoken utterance, provided the injunction be ever attended to: "Be filled with the spirit, speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," a threefold mode of praise which we take to correspond broadly with the three aspects of worship—the didactic, the devotional, and the doxological. In all these ways may the service

of praise truly edify the Church, aiding and supporting the *preaching*, as Elisha said when desirous of help in prophesying, "Bring me a minstrel"; quickening also the *praying*, and enhancing and elevating the *praising* elements in our public worship.

III. *The Spirit of Praise in Worship.* We have seen that there is no more frequently recurring resolution in Scripture than this: "I will sing," or "I will sing unto the Lord." Whatever else it is or is not, praising is a personal privilege, and an incumbent duty for each worshipper. *I will sing*; and I will let no one therefore sing for ever for me. I will be thankful for the help of any leader or choir: but I shall not have them alway for my substitutes. *I will sing myself*; I *will* sing and make conscience of learning, and will strive in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to make melody in my heart to the Lord. And as all worship must be in spirit and in truth, and must be tendered to God through the one Mediator, I would give heed to the exhortation, "Through HIM, let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips which make confession to His name." Here are two significant and suggestive names for praise. It is a "sacrifice"—something demanding cost and self-denial; and all thanks to friends of



the choir who give time, care and attention to this subject for our advantage and convenience. But that is no discharge of obligation for you and me. Our own individual duty remains, to see that we *cultivate* the "fruit of our lips." For culture here is necessary, if the fruit of our lips is not to be crude, unripe, and unsavoury, but wholesome, sweet and pleasing to the taste. Is not our resolution to be that of the Apostle, "I will sing in the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also"? I will intelligently realize and appreciate the *meaning of the words* I am singing, so as to interpret them and render them clear to others. I will sing the *music* also with an understanding mind, so as by the timing and modulating of the tones to bring out the light and shade, the true proportion and perspective of, the meaning and melody. So with voice, "tunably and gravely ordered," I would enter into *the spirit* of what is sung, and of the way it ought to be sung; skilfully as to both matter and manner, and striving to make it a "means of grace" to myself and others. Above all, it must be offered as a sacred oblation with a cleansed and sanctified heart, not lifting up the soul to vanity. "Praise is comely," but it is so "for the upright." It is a saintly service. "Sing unto the Lord, ye saints of

his, and give thanks in memory of His holiness."

IV. *The Conduct of Praise in Worship.* How needful for all the worshippers to be permeated with the one purpose, and be baptized into the one Spirit! How needful to select the tune that is best adapted to the words, and to join in singing it harmoniously! Here, of course, as our Confession of Faith fitly says, there is room and need for the exercise of Christian discretion, inasmuch as "there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God . . . common to human action and societies which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed." How musical expression is best to be regulated, or whether singing is to be led by a precentor, a choir, or an organ, or a combination of them all—these are matters necessarily differing at different times and under different circumstances. The fact, for example, that the Hebrews had no written music-books or musical scales would never be held as a good reason why use should not be made by us of such modern advantages when obtainable; or because *they* knew nothing of "harmony" or the chording of the four parts of treble, alto, tenor and bass, but all voices, male and female,

boys and girls, sang simply in unison, with adaptation of particular instruments to secure emphasis and variety of expression, that lays no embargo on *us*, nor should confine *us* to their ruder and less advanced style of musical art. The mode recommended in this psalm is to praise the Lord with tabret or timbrel, pipe and harp; with cymbals, trumpet and psaltery—all the three forms and varieties of *percussion or clanging, stringed and wind* instruments respectively, all the kinds of musical instruments then in use suitable for worship. Confessedly, our own Presbyterian ancestors reckoned instrumental aids in praise to have been part of Jewish worship, and they understood them to have been abolished with the other ceremonial observances of the old economy. They had experience, also, of the abuses of such aids in Christian service; while the attempt to force the organ on them made that instrument the more hateful to a free and spiritually-minded people. But even in matters of Church usage fashion changes, while principles abide. We would be faithful to the grand and sacred principle that was dear to their hearts and is still dear to ours, to introduce nothing into Divine worship that is unauthorised by the Divine Word, or that is alien to worship in spirit and truth. But

in the application of this principle we vary from them ; rejoicing that in the modern organ we have an instrument marvellously and specially constructed for sacred service, and one which cannot be desecrated by being applied to profane or frivolous uses, besides being wholly dissociated from medieval or superstitious ends.

Doubtless care must be taken to make right employment of an instrumental as of every other accompaniment in music ; but this is the safeguard enunciated and enforced in the closing words of the Psalter, " Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." And the like association is emphasised for us in connection with Heaven's own praise in worship : " And I saw them that had gotten the victory . . . stand on the sea of glass, *having the harps of God*, and *they sing* the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who SHALL not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name ? "

## VI

### PRE-COMMUNION SERMON

“Father, the hour is come.”—JOHN xvii. 1.

WITH these words Jesus begins to pour out His soul in prayer to God before He proceeds to pour out His soul unto death for us all. This is not what we are accustomed to call the Lord's prayer, for *that* He taught to others. But **THIS** is the Lord's own prayer, which He only could use and He alone could offer. In it we have an example, the only example, of that high-priestly intercession of His which He, now within the veil, offers for us. Passing in thought into the holiest place of all, and carrying with Him by anticipation into the Divine audience-chamber the blood of the everlasting covenant—He here kindles the fire of devotion on the inner sacrificial altar and sends up clouds of incense richly perfumed with the sweet savour of His atoning oblation. Here we discover Him transacting with the Father the ineffable business of human redemption where

none other could, without sacrilege and profanation, intrude.

This is the longest prayer any evangelist has been directed to record, and it is the vastest, sublimest and purest that ever rose from earth to heaven. In it we note a threefold series of pleadings :—

*First*, for *Himself*, that He might be so supported in the immediately impending crisis, and pass through it with such fidelity and honour that Father and Son might alike be glorified in the whole of the high and happy result.

*Second*, for *the disciples* now around Him, that they might receive through Him all needful consecration and equipment for their world-wide mission in the interests of saving mercy, grace and truth.

*Third*, for *all in all ages and places* who should believe on Him through their word; for the whole estate, in short, of the Church Universal, in all its interests, members, office-bearers, ordinances and services in time and throughout eternity.

Thus, this prayer embraces the whole origin, management and consummation of our redemption in all its length, breadth, depth and height. Need we wonder, therefore, if the absorption of the Redeemer's soul should have left an



indelible impression on the mind and memory of the disciple whom Jesus loved? John notes, as he seldom does, a change in the look and attitude of his Master: "Jesus, having spoken these words, *lifted up His eyes to heaven.*" Withdrawing His tender look from the disconsolate disciples, He gazes heavenward in devout engrossment, under a burden of thought and emotion which could only find relief in prayer. And thus He begins to unbosom His soul in filial confidence and trustfulness: "Father, the hour is come." Expressive at once of the OCCASION and the SPIRIT of this prayer. To these two things let us now attend in their order.

I. The OCCASION of the prayer. "The hour is come." With what weight and wealth of thought these words are laden! "Now is the crisis of this world." And for Himself "the hour is come." THE hour! What hour is meant He need not say. It explains itself in brief, determinate explicitness.

So much had been spoken of it in type and prophecy; so much preparation had been made for it; so rapidly had events been moving toward it; so unmistakably had His own life been converging on it; so clearly did it stand out to Him in all its momentous significance;

and so well known of the Father, that there was no need for further explanation.

As there is an epoch of such august solemnity yet to dawn on earth that it can best be named "that day," "the day of the Lord," "that great day," so there is a time of such immeasurable momentousness that every other great event—the creation, the deluge, the last judgment, the final conflagration, must do obeisance to it, as the sheaves of his brethren in Joseph's dream did obeisance to his own. This then is *the* hour, incomparable and without an equal; itself alone its only parallel; the hour that should gladden all heaven, paralyze all hell, save the whole election of grace and furnish theme for thought and subject for song through undying ages.

For our Lord Himself it had a twofold and opposite significance. It was to be the hour at once of His *travail* and of His *triumph*: the hour of His desertion and His deliverance: of His passion and His potency: the hour for bearing the Cross, the hour for winning the Crown.

It spoke to Him in two very different voices, and He Himself spoke of it in two very different tones: one of awe, the other of joy. Thus, on the one hand, we hear Him say, "Now is the hour, and the power of darkness"; "Now is

My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." Yet, on the other hand, we hear Him say, "The hour is come when the Son of Man should be glorified." "Jesus knew that the hour was come when He should depart out of this world unto the Father." And so, like the pillar of cloud and fire, this hour was to Him bright with all "excess of light," yet dark with "a darkness that could be felt." It was (a) *The hour of His travail and passion*—the climax and concentration of His sufferings. His life had been one long crucifixion. Now it gathers to a focus of blood-sweat and final agony even unto death. Things concerning Him have an end: and He enters on His closing struggle. It is now "the night in which He was betrayed," that sleepless, chequered, troubled night, deepening into the anguish of Gethsemane, with the treachery of one disciple, the denial by another, the forsaking by all; the malicious conspiracy of the rulers: the arrest in the garden: the iniquitous action of the Sanhedrim: the injustice of the Roman governor: the barbarities of the soldiery: the violence of priests and people: the shame and torture of the scourge: the deeper shame and agony of the Cross: the heart-break and mortal pang that rend asunder soul and body. And all

this was known to Him; He was aware of its near and rapid approach, of its all but instant presence.

"The hour is come," in whose brief crowded space how much has to be done and how much to be undergone! The whole substance and energy of human redemption to be transacted; everything He has undertaken must now be overtaken and accomplished.

And see how the Lord connects "the Father" with all that was specific and peculiar in "the hour." Much that He had endured and must yet endure was suffering common to our humanity. But another ingredient must enter and be all-pervasive. A mysterious hidden fire kindled by the breath of the Almighty was to flame upon Him. A horror of great darkness was to enwrap and fold around His spirit. The thick black thunder-charged cloud of Divine malediction against sin was to shoot out its lightning tongue upon Him. And this was what should constitute above all else "*the* hour," which alone could darken His mind and cast a shadow upon His spirit. All else was but the frame-work of "the hour": so that to carve an effigy on a cross and call that the emblem of redemption is to miss the very essence of the "passion" and drag it down to the level of the crucified malefactors. No!

it was the sufferings of His soul that constituted the soul of His sufferings. Just at the point where the visible and the physical cease, there the peculiarity of "the hour" begins. No bodily suffering can ever expiate human guilt. Sins done in the body are not mere bodily things. They are among the spiritual wickednesses in high places that must be spiritually discerned and spiritually atoned for. No outward pressure and pain could extort a murmur of complaint from the suffering Saviour. It was the intolerable weight of His inward agony, the grief and woe for human transgression, that wrung from Him "strong crying and tears," the sweat as of blood, and at last the loud and mysterious voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"Ah never! never canst thou know  
What then for thee the Saviour bore:  
The pangs of that mysterious woe  
That wrung His bosom's inmost core."

Holy victim! could we collect the tears of widows and orphans in their hour of bereavement: the groans of the battlefield and of those appointed to death: the sobs of the sin-stricken and broken in heart: and those yet deeper forms of woe and anguish which may not even find expression,—what were these all in comparison with one single pang that

entered into the depths of the Redeemer's soul in this last hour?

"Yes, man for man perchance may brave  
The horrors of the yawning grave :  
And friend for friend and son for sire  
May wounded live, in death expire  
From love, from piety or pride :  
But none can die as Jesus died."

"The hour is come" in which He "has to finish transgression, make an end of sin, bring in everlasting righteousness" and work out "eternal redemption" for us. So "the hour" comes to have for Him and for us another and a very different side. The hour of His suffering unto death, it is no less (*b*) the hour of *His triumph and glory : of His bearing the palm and gaining the crown.* It is "the hour when the Son of Man should be glorified": glorified *in* His sufferings : glorified *because of* His sufferings : glorified *in spite of* His sufferings : glorified even by *virtue of* His sufferings : and glorified to the full when all His sufferings are over! The blackest gloom has here, at its very heart, the brightest of lights. What startling conjunctions and paradoxes it contains! If the Author and Giver of being becomes subject to death : if the Prince of Life is killed : if the Lord of Glory is clothed with shame : if the Son of God's love be made a



curse for us ; then also we see here how the climax of human wickedness becomes the very method for cancelling and countervailing the noxiousness and nauseousness of our human corruption and for "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." Its depths of deepest malice shall but serve to reveal more clearly the heights of divinest mercy and grace. The hour of desertion is for Him the hour for deliverance : and the hour of gloom is transfigured into the hour of His glory. Is it a glory to undertake for others and be a propitiation for their sins? "The hour is come." Is it a glory to taste death for every man, even for the ungodly, and to give the life a ransom for many, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour? "The hour is come." Is it a glory to vanquish the kingdom and prince of darkness, cut the sinews of his government and reduce his power to impotence? "The hour is come." Is it a glory to woo and win men back to God : to charm away their enmity and subdue their hearts till they say—

"Nay, now I yield, I yield,  
I can hold out no more ;  
I sink by dying love o'erpowered,  
And own thee conqueror?"

Then "the hour is come,"

Finally, is it a glory to display the most peerless excellences in all their unmatched splendour under pressure of unheard-of sufferings and trials, and to reveal in the midst of them unexampled pity and benignity, meekness and patience, piety and devotion—then, verily, “the hour is come,” than which no other has glory in it “by reason of the glory that excelleth!”

Having thus dealt with the burden or occasion of the prayer, let us now consider, though more briefly—

II. The SPIRIT of the prayer. “Father!” What heart! What depth of emotion is here! We may not enter into the full meaning of the ineffable relationship this great word indicates, nor try to fathom the matchless endearment it expresses. What does it denote but the sublime of all holy *submission* on the one hand, and of all resolute and assured *confidence* on the other?

(a) Is it the hour of *final passion*? What is this address of “Father” but the spirit of filial and submissive obedience, breathing forth the fulness and freeness of his self-surrender to the Father’s will? Oh! let us never view Christ’s sufferings unto death apart from those inner workings of holy principle and sanctified feeling from which they derive their

moral weight and worth. Let us never confuse His sacrifice with His sufferings. His atoning sacrifice was not His suffering, but Himself. The essence of a sacrifice or oblation lies not in the pain but in the spirit of it. He offered Himself in the pain, in the death. Oh! it is this heart for the work that gives worth and efficacy to it all. Father, the hour is come! Here am I to yield Myself and obey. Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour? But for this end came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name! The cup which My Father giveth Me to drink, shall I not drink it? Father! it is no appeal for tenderness and softness. It is the earnest, anxious voice of filial willingness and readiness. Not that He does not wince and quiver under pain and agony. He has sorrow, for His hour is come. His soul is sorrowful, "exceeding sorrowful," even unto death. But He mingles supplication and "strong crying with tears unto Him that was able to deliver Him in respect of what He feared."

As if He might by possibility succumb physically under the strain and stress of this awful hour, He prayed for all needful relief, support and succour, ever saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Yet

nothing will prevent Him thus concluding every appeal again and again, and a third time again: "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." So He yields himself in absolute and whole-hearted consecration and surrender to the Father, a voluntary victim, a freewill offering without reserve. Oh! had He been dragged an unwilling or reluctant sufferer to the altar, had He been seized by resistless compulsion and made to surrender Himself, think you the all-righteous God could have approved so unnatural or so heathenish a sacrifice? No! God is not propitiated by the pain, but by the spirit of an oblation. Separate these sufferings from the inner exercises of a free and full submission and obedience, and there will be left nothing but those outward tortures that can only harrow the sensitive nature and wound the feelings of our humanity. But view them in connection with the vigorous workings of a free and holy nature, then you invest them with all the dignity and glory of the morally sublime, and with all the virtue of the efficaciously atoning?

(b) Is it the hour of *approaching triumph and victorious achievements*? What is this word "Father" but the girding of Himself with hope and confidence and resolute assur-

ance? "Father! the hour is come." I look to Thee. I rely implicitly on Thee. "I *must* do the will of Him that sent Me and finish the work." "The Son of Man *must* go as it is written of Him." Was this, then, so terrible a needs-be, some hard fate? some iron destiny? some mere mechanical or outward pressure? No; it was the sweet inner compulsion of His own holy, precious, and beneficent will. He would not, and therefore could not, save or spare Himself at the hazard and peril of lost and fallen men. The motives that first engaged Him in His sacred mission of human redemption—love for man and zeal for God—how they triumph in Him to the close!

"Goodwill to men and zeal for God,  
His every thought engross;  
He hastes to be baptised with blood,  
He presses to the Cross.  
With all His sufferings full in view,  
And pangs to us unknown:  
Forth to the task His spirit flew,  
His love still urged Him on."

In this spirit of profound filial-hearted devotion to the Father's work, and in perfect harmony with the Father's will, He thus prayerfully and resolutely commits Himself, body, soul, and spirit, to the impending task. "Father, the hour is come."

And now, dear brethren—

“That hour has fled, those tears are told  
That agony is past.

The Lord has wept, the Lord has bled,  
But He has not loved His last.”

Instead of that awful hour to Him, there comes to us another and a different hour—the still, quiet hour of holy love-feast and fellowship with Himself in all the blessed results and fruitage of it. Is not this Communion time, the hour God's children look forward to and prepare for in their hearts? When, instead of the bread of affliction we eat our meat as guests at His table with gladsome thankfulness; when, instead of a cup of trembling we get into our hands the cup of blessing and salvation, and call on the name of the Lord. And as we adopt for ourselves these tender, filial-hearted words, “Father, the hour is come,” and fit them to our own circumstances, shall we not use them now and here to soften all hardness, warm all coldness, quicken all deadness, and subdue all suspiciousness? Thus we will send their echo back again from the Lord's own table, as we say with filial-hearted alacrity and expectation, “Father, the hour is come.”



## VII

### POST-COMMUNION SERMON

“Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father : to Him be glory and dominion for ever.”—REV. i. 5 and 6.

THERE are two special forms of devout utterance with which we are made familiar by their frequent occurrence in Scripture and our common use of them in worship. These are the DOXOLOGY and the BENEDICTION, kindred modes of sanctified thought and feeling, the spirit of both being intensely devotional.

Benediction is the highest reach and culmination of intercessory prayer.

Doxology is the crowning expression of adoring praise.

In the benediction we desire that man may be blessed by God ; in the doxology we would that God may be blessed by man. Taken together they are the highest verbal expression of love to God and to man as the fulfilling of the law. Here, benediction and doxology are found side by side, which occurs in only three

other places of Scripture; and there is a close connection between the two.

John sends greetings to the seven Churches of Asia Minor; and in craving from Father, Son and Holy Ghost the usual benediction of "grace and peace," he combines the salutations of East and West together, in the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ that would stretch forth its hands of blessing over both. In the troubled and distracted East, the fit salute has been always *Peace*! In the more settled West, it took the form of rejoicing for protection and goodwill under imperial sway; but this having a savour of heathenism or worldliness was slightly modified into its nearest Christian equivalent of "Grace!"—and thus both the Eastern and Western modes of greeting were turned to a sanctified use.

Grace is that spontaneous, self-moved goodwill of God, bringing redemption full and free, unsought, unbought, and all undeserved by us. Grace and peace stand related to each other as we conceive of water *stored up* in full supply, and as actually *distributed* in personal experience. Grace is divine peace prepared for us, and peace is grace in enjoyable possession. Grace is the exhaustless reservoir of saving mercy; peace is the individual draught of it, like the glass of water, for each one to slake

their immortal thirst. And because Christ is conceived of as the conduit and medium for turning grace to peace, or for conveying grace to us in the form of peace, the writer breaks forth into this outburst and ebullition of highest worship: "Unto Him that hath been loving us, and loosed us from our sins by His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God, even the Father: To Him be glory and dominion for ever."

This is no mere cold, didactic statement; it is the warm and ardent outburst of grateful emotion, of personal happy experience and of devout ascription. For a doxology is a glowing flame of holy delight and of pure devotion in the spirit of the most exalted worship and homage. Whether this doxology refers exclusively to Jesus Christ, or whether, as in the benediction, it is indicative of the threefold work of redemption by Father, Son and the Eternal Spirit, "Unto Him (the Father) who loved us, and unto Him (the Son) who loosed us from our sins by the virtue of His blood, and unto Him (the Sevenfold Spirit) who hath made us kings and priests to God," in either case, Jesus Christ is made the subject of doxology—an exclusive divine honour, jealously reserved by the sacred writers for God alone, the highest expression of

worship and adoration. Sometimes a doxology is rendered to God through Jesus Christ as the medium and channel through whom the Godhead is to be most acceptably worshipped and glorified. "To the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ, be glory and dominion." But that all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, the sacred writers never hesitate to make Him no less the direct object of doxology. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *to whom* be glory, both now and for ever." To Him we understand the present doxology, with its threefold ascription, to be strictly due. You and I are not called on to worship Jesus Christ without ample grounds and reasons. How supremely reasonable is our faith! To the three reasons here given for rendering this highest homage of devout and grateful hearts to HIM, we are now to attend in their order. If any can truly speak of Jesus as of "Him that loveth us," "Him that washed and loosed us from our sins in His own blood," "Him that hath made us, even here and now, kings and priests in the eye and estimation of God the Father," it would be the height of unreason for any such not to say, "To HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

I. *Him that loveth us.* When Sir James Macintosh lay dying, his friends by the bedside saw his lips slightly moving, and as one of them desired to catch, if possible, the last words of the great and good man, he leaned over, and applying the ear close, heard him saying, "Jesus, love, the same thing ; Jesus, love, the same thing." This, doubtless, is the experience of many here present who have found that Jesus and Love are only the same thing. And if there be any otherwise, let me earnestly beseech and adjure all such that whosoever love they may have had occasion to doubt or suspect, never to doubt or suspect the love of Jesus. The specialty of this love consists in its uniting in itself all the excellences of love, both in its divine and in its human manifestations. For this is a love that fills the divine infinitude, inhabits the divine eternity, is fixed in the divine unchangeableness, and sits enthroned in the divine omnipotence ; and none the less it is pervaded through and through with all the brotherly fellowship and sympathy of a love which is truly human. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," knew well what he was speaking about ; and he adduces here as grounds for doxology that common experience of Jesus' love in which all Christian disciples are joined throughout all ages and over all lands.

The first emotion here is one of great surprise, of adoring wonder, of humbling astonishment. "Him that loved us," as if to say, Who and what are we that we should be the objects of love from *Him*? How is it that He should love *us*? What have we done ever to attract or conciliate *His* love? *Us*, poor, wretched, guilty, sinful creatures, who had done everything to forfeit and alienate all love whatever; *us*, who had become spiritually dead to all good, and torpid under a load of guilt which we could never cancel. He loved us, amid all the loathsomeness of our estate and character, and writhing under the wretchedness we had brought upon ourselves in our low and lost condition. *HIM* that loved us, with a love that constituted its own necessity; defrayed entirely its own cost; directed wholly its own means, and kept ever faithful to its own ideal aim. And if love is that which gives, with a view to bless (not to make us happy only, but to secure within us the blessedness that is the *guarantee* for happiness), here is a love that has given, not simply of what it has, but of what it *is*; drawing upon the last resources of very Godhead, and, at what cost and sacrifice we cannot tell, piercing down through unutterable depths of mysterious pain and passion; and crossing for us "the whole diameter of



being," to make us partakers of the divine nature, and to bless us in turning us away from our iniquities. "Him who loveth us" with a love that would draw us into fellowship and affinity with itself; into perfect touch with it, so as to possess it, and thereby become sharers in the divine blessedness. For it is our blessedness He aims at; not our happiness only, which (as the word itself denotes) depends on what we *have*; whereas our blessedness (which is the *security* for happiness) depends on what we *are*. With love for us of this kind, and having such aims on our behalf, would it not be the height of unreason for us if we were not to say, "Unto HIM that hath been loving us . . . be glory and dominion for ever and ever"?

II. *And that washed us from our sins in His own blood.* This is our primal need and requirement, without which all else were in vain; so love grapples first with this and provides the remedy. "The blood is the life," but it is the *sacrificial word* for the life *poured out*. It is a figure of speech no doubt, but it is the figure for a great and momentous reality. "He laid down His life for us." "He shed for us His precious blood." Let us not unduly materialise this sacred name of "blood," nor let us misapprehend the

meaning of its application. When the soldier at the Cross thrust his spear into our Saviour's side, if some of that precious blood had trickled down the shaft of that spear upon the soldier's hand and arm, no one is so ignorant as to suppose that Christ's blood thus materially applied could have had the slightest effect in washing away the man's sins. Blood is the name for the continued and all-prevailing *efficacy of Christ's atoning work* in offering Himself unto God a propitiatory sacrifice for sin without spot. And this efficacy has a two-fold aspect; an upper and an under side; one toward God in its sin-loosing or expiatory power, for without *shedding* of blood there is no remission of sin; the other toward and upon ourselves, for without believing *application* of it to heart and conscience, there is no washing or cleansing of us from sin. We speak no word in disparagement of the patriot soldier's blood; it may shield his country from invasion or dishonour. We may not derogate from the worth of the true martyr's blood; it is the seed of the Church. But these can effect nothing whatever in respect of human sin. The only element in the universe that can avail to take away sin—all kinds of sin, all degrees of sin, all qualities of sin—is what Christ's holy, wise,

faithful, just, and beneficent love has provided for us and is waiting to apply to us, His own most precious blood. A sevenfold or all-perfect efficacy is ascribed to it. We are *redeemed* unto God by Thy blood. We are *reconciled* to God by the blood of the Cross. We have *peace* by the blood of Jesus. We are *justified* by His blood. It is this blood wherewith we are *sanctified* (consecrated or made fit for offering ourselves for service with acceptance). He hath *washed* us from our sins in His own blood; and finally, when made more than conquerors, we *overcome* by the blood of the Lamb.

Suppose anyone were to say, "We are redeemed by the blood of the Martyr Stephen, we have peace through the blood of Paul, we are justified by the blood of Peter, we are washed by the blood of saints," would not our whole soul recoil with horror from such words of blasphemy? Ah, yes! if we would speak aright of Him who hath washed us from our sins in His blood, would it not be the height of unreason not to say, "Unto HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever"?

III. And hath *made us kings and priests to God, even His Father*. Hath made us now and here—not something to be wholly relegated therefore to the future only. It is a present

position and experience. Nay, what more privileged and exalted condition and relationship can be conceived than this. It is beyond the highest range of the most exalted of holy ambition. What it is to be a king in the eyes and estimation of men is easily known. Who shall have the first homage and obedience of his fellows? A question oftentimes determined on the fiercest and bloodiest battlefields or by the loudest and largest suffrages. Who shall have the right and title to say to this one "Go," and he goeth, or to that one "Come," and he cometh? This is a king in the eye of men. But greater and of greater power in estimation of God even the Father, is he who ruleth *his own* spirit; who has acquired the mastery over sin and self, who is enabled to control and quell the rising passions within, and to say, "My will is mine to make it thine," thus winning the triumph always *over himself*.

But to be a priest in God's sight and estimation is something higher still. Easy to see what it is to be a priest in the eyes of men, and much coveted the office or dignity often is at their hands. But a priest unto God may be a very different thing. Is it not the power and disposition to lay oneself alongside of any of our fellows in Christ-like sympathy and

fellowship according to the needs of each? to esteem the interests of others first rather than our own? to drink in of the mind and spirit of Jesus who thought not of His own things, but had a regard also for the things of others? to be able without loss of personal dignity or self-respect so to stoop in our help or service of them as to promote not merely their good, but their goodness whilst exercising our own? and to be touched with a feeling for their infirmities whilst putting forth a hand to heal, to aid, and to bless. Is not this to be a priest in the eye and regard of our God? and to lodge deep in our nature this double cure, this twofold kingly and priestly power and prerogative, is not this the Lord's own final end and aim with us? Can higher end be reached than that the Lord Himself should be thus formed in us the hope of glory, the power and pattern of the endless life? And how shall this best be secured as a sequel to His great love for us, and His cleansing us by His blood?

Hold any object over the glassy surface of water; hold it low down and the projection of the image will be but shallow. But lo! as you raise it higher and higher, its projection will sink ever deeper and deeper down.

Entertain a low view of Him that hath loved us, and His reflection in us will be but shallow

and superficial! But raise Him, and make Him a subject for worship and doxology; lift Him up in your adoring thought and estimate as these sacred writers try to do in all the sincerity and simplicity of the truth, then will He be projected into your nature's deepest depths, and He will become within you at heart even deeper than love of home, and love of home is very deep; deeper than love of country and kindred, and love of country and kindred is very deep, deeper even than love of life and deeper than what is apt otherwise to be in us deepest of all—the love of self. And so His end shall be increasingly gained the higher He stands up above us in worship and doxology. His image will be projected deeper within us the more He becomes high in our adoring homage and the more we can glory in Him and say, "Unto Him that hath been loving us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to make us a kingdom of priests to our God, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."



## VIII

### "FRIENDSHIP IN DEATH"

#### A MEMORIAL SERMON

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."—JOHN xi. 2.

WHAT an illustrious title is this from our Lord's own lips! It recalls the ancient honour done by God to Abraham, on whom alone of Old Testament saints is a similar name bestowed. The father of the faithful, significantly enough, was called "Abraham My friend, the friend of God."<sup>1</sup> It is no ordinary friendship that is thus announced. There is wrapped up in it something of the enduring and the divine. Lazarus was dead, but what of that? Though he had gone away into the unseen, he is still "our friend." For here is a friendship that has in it immortal germs. Death annuls all mere earth-born friendships: and, alas the day!

"Friend after friend departs,  
Who hath not lost a friend?  
No happy union here of hearts  
That has not here an end."

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xli. 8. How the name has clung to him, even among his Bedouin descendants, who still call his ancient city of Hebron in Arabic, El-Khulil, *the friend*.

But there *is* a friendship, even *here and now*, that holds within itself a pledge of immortality : and death cannot dissolve it. It has been said Jesus was not incapable of friendship. Not incapable ! That were too cold a phrase.

“A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity.” Who ever did so much as Jesus in evoking and reciprocating the gracious offices of friendship ? Above all He did not refuse the burden and depression of friendship's woes and sorrows. On the approach of danger the sisters send to say “He whom Thou lovest is sick,” but ere the messenger had returned, He can tell His disciples the fatal issue, “Lazarus is dead.” Alas ! a common story in this world, yet not less tragic because of its commonness. *Our friend . . . sleepeth* : ah ! this is *the comfort*.

For we must now note, how Jesus finds alleviation of His own and the disciples' grief : and what it is that affords a mitigation of the stroke. It is in the word “*sleepeth*.” For grief there was over this friend's death ; grief, as we learn, even to tears. “Jesus wept.” And over the ravages of the grave, there was groaning in spirit : and such an outburst of sorrow that the bystanders said “Behold, how He loved him.” In anticipation of such grief and bereavement, the Lord takes refuge in this

word of tender, soft, and kindly aspect, Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*.

Jesus did not yet know by His own personal experience what death was, but He knew what it was to sleep: and that to Him is the abiding emblem and name for a *friend's* decease. His own death never in Scripture bears this pleasing name. Its outward violence and its inward awful experiences, as He died for us, the Just One in room of the unjust, seem both to preclude the application. And equally certain, it is never used in the New Testament of death in general, but is appropriated in all its tenderness of association to the release and departure of saints who die in the Lord and sleep in Jesus. The figure by which death is likened to sleep—"Death and his twin-brother Sleep"—is common to all languages. But on Christ's lips the word is minted with a different stamp and superscription altogether. With Him it has far other than the mournful tone it wears in classic poetry, or in the bitter phrases of heathenish despair. With Him it is no more "an *iron* sleep," the *icy* sleep of death, an *everlasting* sleep, or *the sleep that knows no waking*. Ah! there is sleep—and—sleep. For sleep is so different to different experiences and under different circumstances. "The world as a rule sleeps badly," it is said. For along with every

thing else the Fall has dragged down even sleep in its train. When therefore we think of death under the similitude of sleep, we are not to think of any kind of fitful, broken, feverish sleep of the sick in body, or the worried in mind, or the stricken in conscience: no, nor even of "infant slumbers pure and light": but of the perfect sleep of the perfect one, as He had Himself so perfectly experienced it. Once we read of Jesus Himself "taking of rest in sleep" (Matt. viii. 24). It was immediately after His great Sabbath, a day of arduous labour for others, when He not only preached to the multitude His Sermon on the Mount, but entering into Capernaum He had cleansed the leper, healed the Centurion's servant, cured Peter's wife's mother, "and when even was come they brought unto Him *many* that were possessed with devils," and not till night had long fallen, could He enter the little craft to cross the lake, and then sank to rest in the open stern. The rising wind may toss the labouring bark. The howling storm may wax into a tempest and the crested surge may threaten to swamp its living freight "insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves," but only the earnest cry for help can avail to do, what neither the furious elements nor His own personal inconveniences could in any way effect. For His has

been the sleep of the just ; " so the Lord giveth His beloved sleep "—

" A sleep that throws  
Elysium o'er the soul's repose,  
Without a dream save such as wind  
Like midnight angels through the mind,"

and his waking brings an *outward* calm that is a fit reflex of the *inward*. These things surely are an allegory.

It is His own blest sleep that is the real true type and index of the sleep of His friends in death.

In short, what sleep may be to the lower side of life, that also may death be to its upper and higher side. If sleep be a new and not uncongenial phasis of our being : if it be a seasonable and not unwelcome rest after toil : if it be a time and method of further refreshing, that is to be succeeded by a calm, triumphant awakening—and all this it was in highest measure and manifestation to our Lord on that eventful night—what less, what else, can death be in the experience of departed friends of His ?

Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, or rather (as the way and state of *such* a sleeping are perhaps better rendered according to the revised version), Our friend Lazarus is *fallen asleep*. For,

(1) *Life has not with him ceased but only passed into a different phase.* It is a mistake to

confound life with the organization through which it operates : as serious a mistake as to confound force with matter : or unconsciousness with non-existence. Sleep is a kindred mystery with life, though the fact and its phenomena are themselves easily understood and appreciated. In sleep we enter into one of the shadows of death. And when it falls as it does both on soul and body, what a state of unconsciousness and locking up of the senses supervenes ! But nature has only entered on another phase of its manifold existence. The change by death on Lazarus is only sleep : not non-existence, but a seasonable, perchance a not unwelcome alternation of his being.

(2) *Life has passed into a state of deep and calm repose.* Sleep was to himself the season of rest after toil. What an emphasis is lent to this image by the thought of Jesus, after His great day's labour, sinking exhausted into the fishing boat and "taking of rest in sleep." How calmly He lies buried in that noble yet lowly slumber, despite the rising storm and all the bustle that rages round Him. Think of Him lapped in that Paradise of repose, fanned by the cooling night-breath of the open heaven, lulled to sleep by the plash of the oars and rocked into rest by the cradling of the waves. So think of His friends *falling to sleep*, in death.



"They enter into peace : they rest in their beds : each one walking in his uprightness." This is not mere repose of the body and not mere rest in the grave. True, we say, "How still and peaceful is the grave" : and the city of the dead has been made by Him a *cemetery* for us, that is, a *sleeping place*,

"That we may dread

The grave, as little as our bed."

But there is a nobler idea of rest in sleep than this—"a rest that is glorious." For we must think of a state of quietude that settles down on the soul no less than on the body. The entire nature gets lapped and sealed in this blest restfulness. Death is the closing in and winding up of life's weary day with all its crowded work and turmoil. The battle with "the world, the flesh and the devil" is over. Our wrestling with self and sin is triumphantly done. Struggles with doubts and fears, with temptations and sorrows, are at an end. All these have ceased from troubling, when the weary enter rest. Yet death is not, any more than sleep, a mere negation. To be shut in from physical surroundings is not to be shut out from higher activities. To be insensible is not to be rendered incapable. How freely in sleep the inner being gets opened and another world of things is entered on. And in the

death-sleep the better self just gets withdrawn and secluded from things seen and temporal to be the more completely enclosed within the sphere of things unseen and eternal.

(3) *Life has passed into a state of positive refreshment.* It is a state of self-recuperative energy—a needful interlude and ripple in the flow of experience. What a world of sweet and soothing associations gather round this view of the subject. “If he sleep he shall do well,” said the disciples truly. Though they did not see as yet the force of the words, in their equal applicability to the saint’s *death*, yet as we speak of the blessing and the need of sleep—

“Tired nature’s sweet *restorer* balmy sleep;  
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,”—

who will deny a similar need and benefit through means of death? What changes are wrought under the mystic influences of sleep! Nothing else can recruit exhausted nature, and no prescription of physician’s skill can be a substitute for this restorer. So when through death the body is admitted to the refining processes of dissolution and all the silent operations of earth’s vast laboratory, the spirit meantime is caught up into ecstatic experiences, to drink the while at the highest and holiest fountains of life, under the sway of a full and unobstructed

and harmonious flow of an all-absorbing consciousness of God.

"For never doleful dreams again  
Shall break that happy slumber when  
He giveth his beloved sleep."

(4) *For his death, like Christ's own sleep, has the assurance of an awakening with power.* No room, no thought, for the suggestion of possible annihilation here! The thing is unknown alike to science and experience. And there is no analogy in nature for higher human personality escaping through mere perishableness into blank and fatal nothingness. There is no more mystery in awaking from death than from sleep. We are in the habit of witnessing and experiencing the one, and so it seems natural, easy and simple. Yet it is none the less inexplicable: no more to be explained than "*the annual miracle of Aaron's rod blossoming*" and the waking up of nature from winter's death and sleep. To Jesus Himself it presents no difficulty. With calm, simple but sublime consciousness of power, He just quietly adds "But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Yet there needs no undue and hurrying haste! The element of time neither affects the certainty of the event nor the exercise of the power. He will not fulfil His purpose on the spur of the

moment. He will *go* to the very spot where death has seemed to reign and the grave to triumph : and in His own fitting hour and way will unlock the iron gates of sleep and break its spell. For delay to interpose is neither denial of our hopes nor disability to meet them. Such delay will but cast the final issue in a grander mould, and achieve a more significant triumph. His summons shall send its trumpet sound to His people's ears at once and they shall hear the voice of the Son of Man at one universal and resistless thrill. Think how Jesus once awoke from sleep ! How He bound the wind and waves when He arose in tranquil majesty amid tumult and confusion ! For if He fell asleep under the infirmities of a Son of Man, He wakes "the Son of God, with power." And if hitherto death has had it all its own way, there is One now on the road, armed with resurrection power, to overtake what overtakes us all. So far as death may be a foe, it must get disarmed : and the fatal grave-bed made to surrender its tenants. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death ; O death ! I will be thy plagues : O grave ! I will be thy destruction." Thus death itself shall die : and the great devourer of us all shall be itself devoured : and the saying be

brought to pass that is written, "Death is victoriously swallowed up." Let us think therefore of the state of death as but a sleep and awakening. "Thy brother shall rise again," said Jesus, "Yes, in the resurrection at the last day," said the disconsolate mourner. But Jesus instantly makes the bridge between the two events of death and waking: "I am the Resurrection and the Life": and so He binds them close together, as if dying and rising were but a night and morning.

"As at the shut of eve, the weary bird  
Leaves the wide air and in some lonely brake  
Cowers down and slumbers till the dawn of day,  
Then claps its well-fledged wings and bears away."

My brethren, we need from time to time to be consoling our hearts with these elements of Christian comfort. Let us therefore often indulge and cherish the hopes that gleam out upon us from the bright fair morn of the better resurrection,

"When death-divided friends, at last  
Shall meet to part no more."

We come together under the shadow of a heavy loss: under a sense of no ordinary bereavement. Were we to sum up the thoughts and associations that gather round the name of our dear departed, would we not do so most truthfully by just saying of him:—

"Our friend?" His nature was made for the warm and genial solitudes of friendship, and he was one who took delight to "show himself friendly." His name will not be soon forgotten here: nor can a loss like his be soon or easily repaired. This is no place nor time for eulogy. We express our deep warm sympathy with the bereaved family and friends, feeling ourselves bereaved with them. His is a name not to be soon forgotten here. His is a loss not to be easily repaired. We mourn his death. We prize his memory. We gratefully cherish the recollections of his devoted and serviceable life. Above all, we have reason to be thankful for the treasured privilege of having known him and realised the value of his friendship—a friendship in the Lord which death cannot break.

But while we hold firm and fast this true and abiding human friendship in the Lord, let us not fail to perpetuate it by making sure of an interest in the favour of that great Undying Friend whose friendship is the highest, holiest and most satisfying privilege of all. Oh, for that Blessed Saviour to say of each one of us at last, "Our friend . . . sleepeth," and for everyone of ourselves in life and death to be saying of HIM "*This* is my Beloved and this is my FRIEND!"



## IX

### ANTIDOTE TO DEATH TERROR

"Fear not ; I am the first and the last, and the Living one ; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."—REV. i. 17, 18.

A CHIEF design of Christ's gospel is to deliver us from tormenting fears. One of its special keynotes is that of our text, "Fear not"—certainly one of the most frequent exhortations in Scripture, where it occurs at least eighty times.

Terror is so much a staple in our experience that we should not readily think that to be a gospel which provides no antidote. Especially do we need an antidote to terror of death by which so many are kept all their lifetime subject to bondage. So deep seated is this fear that it cannot be just bidden away by mere authority however august, nor charmed away by mere commands however strong. Christ does indeed command us, saying, "Fear not," but then He presents not His words only, but *Himself* alive from the dead as the grand antidote. "I am

the Living One, I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of death and the grave."

Let us guard ourselves however against possible mistake. Christ never means us to make light of death, or cherish no aversion and antipathy to it. No words of His will ever weaken any right sense of its awfulness and solemnity. "That man must be a coward or a liar," says the Duke of Wellington, "who could boast of never having felt a fear of death." Had we no aversion or shrinking from it, we should be lacking in the ordinary instincts of self-preservation and in due reverence for the sanctities of that human life which man may destroy but can never replace. Had we no native horror at the shedding of human blood, we might rush on suicide or murder, with the ferocious delight of savages or brute beasts. Yes! there is a rightful fear of death which is associated with a sense of the blessing and value of God-given life and in fullest accord with all the primary instincts of our being and well being. This laudable fear we cannot suppose is meant to be impaired by the Gospel. No! the Lord's words here do not mean that we are to fear nothing of that natural fear of death which is one of the strong safeguards of our own life and that of others. It is only the

tyrannous, embarrassing, distracting, oppressive, mischievous terror, that becomes simply a curse and a snare for all who come under its sway, to which this command "Fear not" applies, and from which it is part of the gracious Saviour's design to deliver us.

At the first glance of a superficial observer, it might seem as if death were the be-all and end-all of our human destiny. But whatever *prominence* death may have in our earthly lot, it was assuredly never meant to have the *pre-eminence*. "I am the First and I am the Last," is our Saviour's prior claim. He is the First from whom all things proceed, and the Last so as to be beyond all else, and so beyond even death itself. Christ presents Himself therefore as the abiding, persistent and living force ; and life in Him is like the great unwinding warp threads that roll on and on, and that bind the short crossing weft threads of our passing existence into one long, unbroken web.

Death is but an interlude after all. It puts a conclusive period no doubt to our own stay on earth, but it is a something superficial, not fundamental, a something temporary, not permanent. Whatever it may be as a fact of experience it is not an original foundation-stone of our being. It is an intrusion ; not the primary ideal. In some sense it is a very real

mercy and a benefit, for we may truly say we would not live always under the present conditions of living. Neither optimism nor pessimism is the true theory of the present state, but a third something that embraces both, and lifts them together into a common unity that can reconcile the two. When, therefore, the Redeemer Himself stands forth on the plane of His own human history, how transient His experience of death is seen to be! "Behold, I am alive for evermore." So it is for all bound up in Him:—

"Death wounds to cure:

We fall! we rise! we reign!

Spring from our fetters, fasten on the skies,

Death brings us more than was in Eden lost,

The King of terrors is our Prince of peace."

For it is life not death that is the persistent force: and it is to life not death the Lord directs supreme attention. "I am the Living One who was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." Above all He says "I have the Keys of death and the Unseen," for that is both the right meaning and the right order of the words: Keys being the emblem of lawful authority and jurisdiction, and "Hades" being the name for the Vast Unseen realm of human spirits, over which the risen Lord has as supreme a power as He has over death, He

presides alike over the visible and the invisible constitution of things, and over the passage that lies between. To believe this is the one adequate safeguard against all embarrassing and tormenting fears of death whencesoever they spring and howsoever they may operate.

There are two classes of such fear: one primary and essential, the other secondary and circumstantial.

The main terror of death arises from its being the curse and dark shadow and the reminder of our sin. "The sting of death is sin." It is not the pangs and pains of dissolution, it is not the mere separation from the friends, society, and occupations to which we have been accustomed, it is not in such circumstantials that the chief terror of death lies. No! it is the sense of sin burdening the conscience accompanied with dread of deserved penalty and with the foreboding of guilt, it is this that arrays death with a kind of terror for us, unknown to the inferior and irresponsible creatures. How relief from this is gained for us by Christ, and how such relief may be experienced by those who are knit to Him by a living faith, we are not at present to dwell upon, beyond reminding ourselves that as it is from actual sin, death derives its power, and from conscious sin it derives its terrors, so

by Christ's death it is bereft of its power, and by faith in Him risen, it is bereft of its terrors. Or to express it otherwise—Christ by His Cross extracted the sting of death, by His resurrection He defied its power, and by faith in His name He uproots its terrors from our mind and alters forever its whole aspect, for now it is no longer only a curse, but a curse transfigured and transformed into occasion for triumph.

There are, however, other terrors of a secondary yet severe enough kind that may be both alleviated and removed by the consideration of our text, and it is to these we confine ourselves entirely this morning. Such are the *inevitableness* of our individual death, *its loneliness*, the *uncertainty of its time*, and *its unknown circumstances and manner*, and it is on these we may find not a little relief and comfort from the suggestions of our text. It says to us for example—

“FEAR NOT THE *INEVITABLENESS* OF YOUR  
DEATH,”

For it is life that is more inevitable for us in Christ than is death in nature. In Him risen from the grave we see mortality swallowed up of life. If death is a foe it is a vanquished foe for us in Him, and so the last enemy,



death, shall be destroyed, the great devourer shall be devoured, and finally victoriously swallowed up. His was no secret or unpronounced antipathy to death, no mere inert antagonism, no idle threat, no empty defiance! The grave received Him but it could not retain Him, He could not be holden of death. He lived it down so to speak, He lived through it, He lived in spite of it, He rose triumphant above it, and is now more than conqueror over it. So has He acquired the right and the title to say "Oh! death I will be thy plague, O grave I will be thy destruction—repentance shall be hid from mine eyes—I will ransom them from the power of the grave—I will redeem them from death?" Thus He has brought life as an immortal thing to light, so that death is no longer a leap in the dark, or a plunge into some ghostly realm of torpid, shadowy half-and-half existence. In Him is light and that light is the life of men. Oh! if it may be said in these mechanical and utilitarian days that Christ invented no machine, constructed and devised no engine, loom or mariner's compass, laid down no system of physical science, discovered or expounded no laws of electricity, organised no telegraphic system and the like, let us not fail to remember that the deepest needs of men

lie back of all such things, however valuable and important they may be in their own place.

The pressure on human head and heart and conscience is in no way lightened, far less removed, by these scientific and mechanical discoveries and appliances, however much they add to the comfort, convenience and dominion of man. Nay, it is not unfrequently these very successes and comforts of our life that make it all the harder to die. "Oh! David," said Dr Johnson to his rich and successful friend Garrick, when strolling through the magnificent house and viewing the accumulated comforts and possessions, "Oh! David, these are the things that make it more difficult and terrible to die." But even from this sorry mood Christ saves us and lifts us above its gloom. By conquering death He has abolished its dolefulness, created a brighter horizon beyond, and poured into believing souls a tide of light that brings new life and raises them to a higher liberty.

#### FEAR NOT THE *LONESOMENESS* OF YOUR DEATH

An idea of the awful solitariness with which we must encounter our death is paralysing to many. All by ourselves, and one by one, must each pass through the dark valley. Friends and family may stand around our bed and

soothe by their presence and sympathy the process of dissolution. But while they watch with tenderness the inevitable issue, they cannot accompany us, and are alike unable to realise what we feel or in any way deliver us.

On the other hand, it may be our lot to die all alone, even outwardly, with not a living soul at hand to witness our decease, or catch our last faltering accents. We may be so suddenly cut off that no survivor may have power to testify the hour of our departure, and neither the outward causes nor the precise spot of our dying may ever be told.

But in any case the spirit has to leave the body all alone, for the solitariness of that supreme hour is as inevitable as death itself. Is it not an awful experience of severance of tender ties and separation from the human fellowship we have enjoyed, and from the companionship to which we have grown accustomed?

One by one we are to enter that lonesome way and learn each for himself, or herself, the secrets of its passage. "Fear not," He says who holds the key of its gateway, and who presides over its course, and who knows its every winding and turning, "I am with thee. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they

shall not overflow thee." He is not forced like our earthly friends, the nearest and dearest, to stand helplessly unhelpful on the river brink, while we cross the Jordan out of their view. His eye goes forth not only on the busy scenes of life, but on all the secret and sacred mysteries of death. Yes! and on the road through the mysterious vestibule of death and the unseen, which is so shrouded in impenetrable darkness to our feeble vision, His presence is ever the illuminating and cheering light. "Precious *in the sight of the Lord*?" Yes! "in the very sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

How the loneliness is relieved by the assurance of His promised power and presence. "My presence shall go with thee." This is what lifts the soul out of the region of mere gloomy foreboding of loneliness and all its terrors. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, whatever evils I feel or whatever evils I expect to feel, I will at least fear none of them, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

FEAR NOT THE *UNCERTAINTY* OF THE TIME  
OF YOUR DEATH

It can only happen in the actual present when it comes, and it is quietly relegated to

that future present when Christ is realised as here He depicts Himself—The great *I am* ;  
 “Fear not,” *I am*.

“I am the First and I the Last, time centres all in Me.”

The unknown future is not only made clear in Christ, but its uncertainty is made tolerable because free from anxious fears about times and seasons which He keeps in His own power, as we believe so wisely and so well. He would fain mitigate that feverish terror that is associated not only with the inevitableness or solitariness, but with the dread uncertainty of the time of our death, which is apt to prey upon the mind contemplating the indefinable hazards and speculating on the varied possibilities of the future.

The keys of that invisible realm are in His hands. Nothing can open any of its gateways without His appointment or apart from His actual living presence and permission. We indeed find life here very short at the longest and very insecure at the strongest. We come here late, we go from here early, but nothing can abridge the term He assigns, and He alone must open the door when it is our time to depart. And oh! surely when fear is apt to assail us as we reflect on the natural frailty of our frame that renders it so liable to death at

every moment, on the innumerable hazards to which we are exposed and the variety of accidents and fatalities to which we may be brought face to face at any sudden turn, it must be an antidote to such disabling or coward fear to know that the key of the very time of death is in our Saviour's hand, and that come what may it is Himself that says of that door, "I am He that shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth." Specially, if we find ourselves suffering from some incurable malady, from some prolonged or gnawing disease for which there is no help from man at all, or from some deep-seated ailment that because of a constant threatening of fatal issue makes us go softly all our days, what a soothing and assuaging consideration to deliver us out of the bondage of cruel fear is presented to us in our text. And if, as is not unlikely with one or another now here, their reflection is—

"I say sometimes with tears:

Ah me! I'm loath to die,"

if we are painfully aware "there is no man that hath power over his spirit to retain his spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in this war." Oh! what discharge from fear at least, and from harassing terrors, often more destructive to vital force than



disease itself, when we call Him up before the eye of our faith, and when we believing, hear and entertain Him who so accosts us—"Fear not, I am the First and the Last and the Living One: I am He who was dead and behold I am alive for evermore."

FEAR NOT THE *INSCRUTABLE MANNER OR CIRCUMSTANCES* OF YOUR DEATH

The mind in a pensive mood is apt to be clouded and oppressed by melancholy fears and speculations as to the mode of our dismissal from this present life. We may be called to go hence, as we are apt to conceive, in a thousand possible ways. But when we realise that all such fancies are groundless inasmuch as we each can die but once and in only one particular form, we even then are apt to wonder what that one way is to be, and which, out of so many ways, we would on the whole prefer. Now such idle surmisings so easily produce the disquietude of anxious and disturbing fears accompanied with nervous tremors or the fretfulness that comes of paralysing terrors.

Some may die under a sudden stroke without premonitory warning or other symptoms, others may be laid for long on a bed of lingering pain and disease: some may die in their sleep,

others drop from their chair, some be killed by accident, others cut off by woeful mishap, run over in the street, poisoned by mistake of medicine ; some may die early, others in mid-time of their days, and others spared to a good old age. Yet what matters it whether it be by accident or disease, by violent or calm dissolution, by gentle decay or sharp collapse, by lingering illness or speedy dissolution, so long as we know it is the chosen and appointed way of Him who has the keys and through whom we have not only become reconciled to death in any form agreeable to Him who has redemptive jurisdiction over its sway. But we have learned to triumph over its tyrannous power, come when and as it may, when we have learned that it cannot either in its mode or circumstances affect the tie that binds to Him who holds supreme control over all its forces, contingencies, associations and issues. "In His hand our life is, and His are all our ways."

So we rise above the oppressive fears of death in all its incidental circumstances, just as, on the same grounds, we weep not in terrifying awe and lamentation over our holy dead, as if theirs were a hard and evil lot.

We mourn our own losses and bereavements in their removal from our midst, we weep like

Jesus Himself over the long reign and cruel ravages of death : nor are we forbidden such rightful grief, nor the affectionate tears of mutual sympathy. But such tears are no emblem of terror, no signs of abject fear, even in the very presence and prevalence of death. Rather are our tears, like the raindrops on which the sunshine arches the joyful bow of a full assurance of hope : and we triumph afresh in every fresh triumph we are permitted to witness in others over death's terrors. And blessed be God, we are never long without witness of those of our number who have gained such victory over the fears of death and the grave, as well as over many another fear besides.

I have been led this morning to this particular text aside from our usual place, because if one thing more than another entered into the life and death experiences of her whom we laid on Friday to rest, it was emphatically this spirit of calm and steady fearlessness. As it was with her in life so was it with her also in death. Not unfrequently the Lord evokes this very fearlessness from one of the gentler sex quite as much, to say the least, as from the more physically robust and strong, for it is often the way in which faith triumphs over sight : and feebleness waxes valiant in fight and puts to flight whole armies of aliens,

whether alien fears or alien foes, alien cravings or alien ambitions. One of the oldest of our members, belonging to this church from early years and united to it by a life-long connexion, it could not be said that either in living or dying she was without her struggles, but she seemed to be ever without undue fears. More than most she seemed to hear re-echoing in her ears such words as "fear not"—"be of good courage"—"hope and be undismayed." This furnished her with inward nerve and dauntless spirit in the face of whatever evil tidings she had to hear, or trials to encounter or troubles to battle with. Now the same spirit of gracious fearlessness was not less evident in view of death and it was this that made her meek and without a murmur in suffering—patient under tribulation and more than conqueror at the last solemn time. The hymns of fearless faith and hope we sung this morning were favourites with her, which she loved to repeat or hear repeated. Her last words to myself were "Peace, perfect peace," in happy allusion to the well-known favourite hymn with which we are about to close this service.

Her removal will not be all loss to us, nor her fearlessness be all thrown away, if only we take to ourselves the same antidote which

made her strong to do and to die ; “ *Fear not ; I am the First and the Last and the Living One ; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and the Unseen.*” AMEN.

## X

# A STUDY OF "TEMPTATION"

### FOR YOUNG MEN

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."—JAMES i. 12.

THERE are three questions answered for us in our text.

I. What is our present state of life? It is a state of temptation : say rather of probation for testing and proving us.

II. What ought to be our present conduct in such a state? To be enduring, so as to stand approved.

III. What experience shall we be gaining and attaining thereby? We shall be getting our life crowned with blessedness which is more than happiness. "Blessed is the man when he is approved; he shall be receiving life for a crown"—the victor's very crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that are loving Him.

I. *What is our present state of life?*  
Temptation, like so many words, is used in a



good or a bad sense. For it means, properly speaking, simply the testing of character, in which process there is of course some measure of trouble, risk or danger. We do not say of a school under examination that it is being tempted : because the tests or standards there used are simply to gauge intellectual gifts or attainments. But the *moral* process to which we all are subject, where the tests are applied to character, to disposition, to conduct, is more properly temptation : because the very tests there may be perverted by us into enticements or allurements to evil.

We must discriminate fairly between the two uses of this word. One time we read, "God did tempt Abraham" : but at another time we read, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God."

One while it is, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" ; and again, "Lead us not into temptation."

One while it is, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" : and at another, "Watch and pray that ye be entering not into temptation."

The paradox is explained in the double process to which even our Blessed Saviour found Himself exposed. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil." We have to concede to God His un-

contested right to subject all the creatures of His moral government to such trial and testings as may reveal to ourselves and others what manner of spirit we are of.

It is in the alembic of moral testing into which we are all wisely and graciously cast that we are both tried and improved by our experience as an educator: just as by fire the refiner both tests the metal and separates and clears away the dross. But the process may be abused and perverted, and the very tests be made enticements to evil. For there is a *test* temptation and an *enticement* temptation.

Between temptation pure and simple and the various abuses of it there is a threefold distinction—

(a) *In Design.* The divine purpose and idea is purely benignant: it is to test and train; the satanic idea is to provoke to further evil and wickedness.

(b) *In Method.* The divine method is according to truth and wisdom. The satanic abuse is according to cunning and fraud, proceeding by blandishments, by snares and concealed hooks, by gilded lies, by alluring baits offered to our coarser nature and our bad propensities. The design of the satanic method is simply to mislead and beguile.

(c) *In Spirit.* The divine spirit would both temper it and lend a helping hand through it: the satanic spirit would malignantly push us into it and keep the victim unnecessarily under it.

Now, therefore, temptation is not in itself an evil. Temptation is not sin though it is suffering. Jesus suffered, being *tempted*. "Birds fly over our head," says the German proverb, "but we need not let them build their nests on it." We cannot escape subjection to tests, but they need not prove our undoing. We are not to be such puling sentimentalists as to run away from life and its duties and its callings because they are thickly set round about with temptation. In running from one, people run into another. It is our state of present probation. There is poison in our food and in the air we breathe. We need it, but we need not therefore be poisoned. We are tempted: we need temptations: but we need not fall under them, nor weakly succumb to them. It is the yielding to them that is sin. Nor ought we ever to forget that they are wisely mixed and adjusted in every case and not less wisely administered.

Blessed is the man that endureth them so as to stand approved by virtue of his right and wise use of them.

II. *What ought to be our present conduct in this present state of temptation?* "To be enduring so as to stand approved."

To endure is a very *modest and encouraging* word. It is not on the one hand "Blessed is temptation," for that depends on the use we make of it, nor "Blessed is the man that is subjected to temptation," for that is our unavoidable condition for good or evil. Nor on the other hand is it, "Blessed is the man that defies temptation, or that scorns and *under-estimates* it, or that *shirks* it, or that dreams idly and listlessly through it. And least of all is it, "Blessed is the man that encourages or that tempts temptation; but that *endures* it—who accepts the probationary idea as the true idea of life, who meekly undergoes trial and tests of all various kinds and degrees as the true discipline and educative force of life, and who seeks by rightly bearing his part and patiently going through the sifting process, to be approved of Him "whose eyes behold and whose eyelids try the hearts of the children of men."

Enduring is a *cautionary* word. It reminds us that none are too strong to enter lightly or unaidedly into this great life-testing process. Do it seriously, as those who feel the "need of heavenly power, to guard

us in the evil hour." Do it solemnly and circumspectly as those who see the whole shore-way of life, specially of early life, strewn with the stranded wrecks of ships that gallantly but not wisely, nor with thoroughly furnished equipments, put out from harbour with merely merry and frivolous notes, to be swamped in the hazardous and treacherous waves and quicksands, too recklessly or fool-hardily entered on. We may not uncharitably make ourselves the judges of others—

"Then at the balance let's be mute,  
We never can adjust it ;  
What's done we partly may compute,  
But know not what's resisted."

Only let the broken hearts of bereaved mothers, the melancholy tales of the prison cell, the secrets hidden in untimely graves, the walking wrecks and skeletons of wasted lives, and all the unnameable and harrowing tragedies of human history, lend the force of tenderest pathos to our reading of these affecting words, "Blessed is the man that ENDURETH temptation, so as to stand approved."

III. *What shall we be gaining thereby?*  
The blessedness of having life for a Crown—  
for that is the promise and the potency of our present state as a state of trial, when it stands

approved. This experience is not to be relegated away into the remote future, or to the life after death merely. "You shall receive a crown of life when this present life is over"—is a true thought, but so expressed it were a somewhat jejune and juvenile idea.

— Blessed is the man (not merely blessed *shall he be*) who is enduring probation, for it is just in so far as he is being approved that he shall be receiving life for a crown; the very crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

— There are two totally different words for "crown" in Scripture. One is the *official* or *monarch's crown* worn as an emblem of authority and dignity. The other is the *personal* or *victor's crown*, given as a reward of faithful and persistent struggle, the laurel crown, the outcome and result of triumph in the fight or in the race. This latter is the word here—something gained as an outcome of wrestle and struggle. Now, the reward of life, of struggling life, is just more life, life more abundantly. There is life that *is* a struggle: there is life that is the issue of a struggle.

— Ah! what we need is life, just life, not as a mere gift, but as a crown. You like to see things crowned, the year crowned with the



Lord's goodness; any effort crowned with success. Now a life-struggle so far as it is a triumph is attended by a life-crown. This is the law of our being from which there is no escape. There is a mastery, an approval, the result of enduring, which we are called to gain—now and here, as well as then and yonder. Life is given us here out of which to *make* more life. We are possessed of something to control, not ourselves to be merely controlled. We are to be the *sovereigns* not merely the *subjects* or the sports of temptation and circumstance.

Oh! it is a sad thing to see a man sinking below instead of rising on the crest of the wave of probation which meets him. It is a sight which makes the heart beat faster to see a fellow creature struggling to breast wave after wave. "It is difficulties which make miracles possible," says a true French proverb. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. Blessed is much more than happy. Happiness depends upon circumstances and moods. We are happy when the sun shines—happy when we have health, happy when we are fortunate. But sunshine, health, good fortune all fluctuate. Now blessedness is something that does not fluctuate. Blessedness is the security or guarantee for happiness. Happiness (as its derivation suggests) depends on what we *have*,

blessedness on what we *are*. Happiness is related to our state or position, blessedness to our disposition or character. Happiness is related to felt good, blessedness is related to felt goodness. Happiness is related to life as a gift, blessedness is related to life as a crown.

[ ~~For~~ ~~As~~ there are two different words for "crown" in Scripture, so are there two different words for "life." One is the life of circumstance or environment: what we call *biography*—very transient and changeful. This is what the Apostle John means when he speaks of "the pride of life," which just strives and struggles hard to keep death at bay. But it has death encamped within it, and the hand of death is ever pressing on it. Yes: our outer phenomenal life is but a living death. It is touched by perishableness. Decay's effacing finger obliterates its freshness and durableness. We gain a prize: we win a post in life and it is well: lo! while yet the flush of triumph is on the face, the solemn feeling steals over us that as the flushed colour mantling the face soon changes and passes, so it is with all things that afford a bright but transient delight. How soon the tarnish gathers on the medal that is the student's ambition, how soon the very crown

or chain of office needs to be renewed, and the plate and furniture and jewellery and all the garnishings of sculpture and painting get swept into dustbins. "These are the things," said Dr Johnson to Garrick, "which make life a misery and death a terror." Oh! what we need is life—a life that is the crown and fruit of enduring struggle—a life that has on itself and all its belongings a stamp of deathlessness.

There is a difference between life and existence. A stone exists and lasts, but it does not live. The difference is as great as that between merely BEING and genuine WELL-BEING. For what is life? Modern science calls it *a tendency* towards adjustment, realised by test and stress and strain and struggle; the tree that battles successfully with the blast is thereby strengthened, and is fitted for living in its new climate and environment. But when the adjustment is complete and perfect what then? It is life *crowned*. Trial, testing, temptation is the way toward such approved life, and the diversities of the temptations are the instruments of God's educative wisdom in his own child-school. Trial-temptation, enticement-temptation come to all, but it is our deportment in it and our approval from it, that determines the measure of our adjust-

ment to our environment. We are being tried and tested, each issue attests success or failure in this adjusting process; and at last this issues in the grand trial time before us all—when the verdict will just be the sum of the individual verdicts that are being now

registered. Oh to be so enduring temptation as that the adjustment shall be perfect at last.

“He that endureth to the end”—he that *is enduring to the end*—the same is being saved. This is *the* life—the life in which as an imperishable element, we live and move and have not only our being but our indestructible well-being.

There is one thought more on which we cannot now do more than touch.

“To them that are loving Him.” How close the connection between living and loving, if indeed they be not one and the same. Loving the Lord is the very secret and method of enduring temptation. Loving Him is life’s crown—the crown of that free, unfettered life which eludes the grasp of death and escapes its fatal touch.

Loving Him is the blessed *enduring* of temptation.

Let me close with a physical illustration.

Temptation is like that substance which enters more largely than any other into the

composition of this earth of ours. It constitutes half of the crust of the globe, more than four-fifths of the ocean, and more than three-fourths of our very bodies themselves. It is one of the so-called elements or world materials, and chemists name it *oxygen*. Temptation in this world is just like that. The marvellous thing about this omnipresent element is the twofold character it seems to bear. It is at once the mildest and the fiercest of all elements. Alike the nourisher and destroyer of whatever lives. It is at once the test and scavenger of nature. Nothing can grow without its aid, it is the vital ingredient in the breath of our nostrils, and yet it is the element that searches out every weak place in our system and tests even to destruction the corruptions on which it fastens itself. The thing that feeds life and fosters its strength is the very thing that tears worthless being to pieces and overwhelms it with ruin.

(It is the nourishing power in the genial rain of springtime, it is the consuming fire of autumn which, while it glorifies the tints and colours of the woods, ensures the dank and repulsive masses of vegetable decay and dissolution.

~~Strange yet suggestive paradox!~~

~~Strange yet suggestive parable!~~

How fraught with blessing and cursing!

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation!

We move by it: we strengthen by it: we conquer by it. But what wonder, if so many are devoured by it like stubble ready to be consumed. ~~Oh! to~~ flee these ashes of life;

~~oh! to~~ make sure of life's crown.



## XI

### JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

“A man is not justified by works of law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ.”—GAL. ii. 16.

IT is not through obedience to law that any sinner of mankind can hope to get himself declared free from his guilt, but it is only by his faith in Jesus Christ. Or as this same apostle declares in another letter of his,<sup>1</sup> “Therefore we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from works of law.”

This is still the article of a standing or falling Church. It is no less the article of a comfortable or a comfortless soul. For here we find the ultimate test or touchstone to determine whether God's way of saving sinners and delivering them from the thralldom of slavish terrors or superstitious fears about Himself is being truly received and appreciated. “God justifies the ungodly who are believing in Jesus”: because He would demonstrate that He is both a just God and a Saviour: favourable toward His sinful creatures, yet showing

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 28.

no favour whatever to their sin. Salvation is of faith that it may be seen to be of grace : not a matter of purchase on our part by our own doings and merits : not something for which we can ever lay down an equivalent : not an outcome or reward of our own righteous conduct. Let us consider

I. *What is really the meaning of our being justified.* And in this way we shall readily come to see how it must be as the result of our faith in Jesus Christ that we can truly be *held to be righteous* in God's judgment (for that is what "to be justified" means), apart from any fancied or boastful doings of ours that might be deemed real and complete obedience to God's law.

Justification, ~~it should be clearly understood at the outset,~~ has to do solely with the question of a sinner's *status* before God : just as citizenship has to do solely with a man's *status* before the law, apart from personal character or private conduct. True we are no less sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus than justified ; and union to Christ by faith, is the common bond at once of a holy nature and of a right standing before God. But for all that, justification, however necessarily it is bound up with sanctification, like two inseparable strands of one rope, is not to be confounded with it, as unhappily the

Council of Trent does in declaring (Canon. vii.) "that justification is not remission of sins only but also the sanctification and renewal of the sinner." Very true, that justification is not remission of sins only, for it includes also the reponing of a sinner in his rightful status before God's holy law which he has violated : but for justification to be confounded with sanctification is an extraordinary confusion both of words and of things : a jumbling together of matters which, however inalienably related, and co-existent, are not at all the same things in themselves any more than a title to citizenship is a certificate of honesty. The faith that secures justification is the faith of course that also sanctifies and guarantees a holy life because it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. But justification is the *Father's part* in applying to us the first benefits of redemption : sanctification is the *Holy Spirit's part* in working redemption in us : and no good can come either to clear thinking or to practical godliness by confounding things so plainly distinguished. The two indeed are never found divorced : but they *are* two, and to confound them is to do dishonour at once both to the special work of the Father and to that of the Holy Spirit. It is God the Father that justifies the ungodly who submit to honour Him by trusting in His Son for their salvation ; and it

is in justification we begin to get individually the first blessing of redemption. As sinners we are not only liable to be condemned, but we are condemned already. That is our status before the holy law. In justifying, God takes off that sentence. This being justification in its nature, we are now to consider

II. *What is its relation to the various things associated with it.* Thus it is written: "We are justified freely by *God's grace*." <sup>1</sup> That is, it is an act of the divine favour which we do not deserve. But it is a just act upon God's part, and therein it brings peace of conscience to us. For we see we are not being forgiven in a wrong or unrighteous way. We are graciously provided with a righteousness perfectly adequate to all the requirements of divine law, which we are permitted to proffer and plead alike at the bar of God and of our own conscience. So, as we would not like to be saved at the expense of equity and justice, we are enabled to put in a plea whereby God is seen to be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: "He is *just* to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is so, because "we are justified *in the name of the Lord Jesus*," <sup>2</sup> that is, for His sake and by virtue of His merits and mediation: or more explicitly, we are

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 24; Titus iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. vi. 11.

justified "by His blood," that is, by his sacrifice of expiation and atonement for our sin, whereby "He who knew no sin was constituted sin for us that we might, in Him, become the righteousness of God." This righteousness is the *ground* of a sinner's justification before God: *that* in consideration of which a sinner is righteously forgiven his iniquities, and stands on a rectified footing with God. The *method* of God's justifying procedure, or the *means* whereby a sinner finds himself in a justified state is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: "Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law but by means of *faith only in Christ Jesus* . . . for by works of law shall no flesh be justified." <sup>1</sup> Consider then

III. *What is the METHOD of God's procedure in justifying the ungodly.* It is by faith alone. The faith which justifies—which *receives* the *benefits* of Christ's righteousness (for there is no transference or confusion of character or merits—it is the righteousness or merit that is *imputed* and it is the benefit, not the merit that is transferred) so as to constitute a sinner a truly righteous person, entitled to be justified—is not, of course, any faith or faith in any kind of thing. It is distinctively and decisively faith in the Lord Jesus. There is nothing simpler, nothing more requisite, nothing more

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 16.

universal than faith. No one can live mentally without faith any more than physically without breathing. It is involved in every act of an intelligent being: in fact it is the one connecting link between being and knowing. And all faith, as a process of mind, is the same—it is accepting something upon some testimony or other. Faith in the Lord Jesus is based on *God's* testimony respecting *Him*. True we may accept much that God has testified of Him, yet not have faith in Himself. This, however, can only arise from our not receiving some chief part of that testimony: that in our condition of sin and danger we individually need a Saviour: that this Saviour is His only begotten Son, whom out of love for the lost and ruined world He has sent to be a propitiation for our sins, and that every sinner is bound, commanded, warranted, and welcome to put his or her trust in Him—voluntarily, yet not without the help of divine grace—so as to receive and enjoy the offer and benefit of pardon, peace and purity at His hands. If we were to believe all the rest, but did not believe this last part of God's testimony, we should not be "shut up into the faith of Christ," because our faith would still be assent only to certain historic or doctrinal truths about the Saviour without going forward to personally trusting to Christ



Himself as we are required and bound to do. For faith in Christ is not mere *assent to truth*, however important, but according to Holy Scripture, saving faith is *trust* in a Person. It is reliance on Christ Himself; not merely faith in His sacrifice but in "*Him* sacrificed for us"; not merely in His cross but in "*Him* crucified": not in His righteousness only, but in "*the Lord, our righteousness.*" So this faith is an abiding attitude of confidence, vitally uniting the whole nature to Christ and binding us up in Him. And this alone is the faith that justifies. By this method, salvation is seen, in even its initial blessing, to be of God's grace: for faith or simply *receiving* a righteousness and its benefits, adds nothing to their value or merit any more than a beggar in receiving an alms adds anything to its value: or a window in admitting the light adds anything to the qualities of the light it admits. Hence the contrast of the two possible methods—faith in Christ and works of law. If we are justified by *receiving* something as a gift, *that* excludes all idea of our having earned it, by our doing something for it that entitles us to it. No doubt we are to "buy" the wine and milk of God's free redemption, but it is to be bought "without money and with-

out price." No doubt it is true that we must sacrifice something, nay everything for it—we must count all things but loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus that we may win Him and be found in Him, but we can never dream of laying down an equivalent. All that we forsake of self-indulgence and all that we surrender which we may formerly have prized, whatever it may cost us to do, is literally nothing compared with the value of what we receive. Forgiveness is a priceless boon, which all our tears, all our repentance, and all our best doings can neither deserve nor enhance.

"All for sin cannot atone  
Thou must save and Thou *alone*."

What is meant by "a man being justified by works and not by faith only," as the Apostle James says, we shall presently see. It will be found not only not at all opposed to but vigorously strengthening the Apostle Paul's position—"To him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"—his faith is taken into account and the sinner is thereby credited with the righteousness he presents and pleads for forgiveness and acceptance before God, "Even as David describeth

the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying, "Blessed is the man . . . to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And this is no mere legal fiction or make-believe procedure. It is a tremendous reality for every man who wants his sins *righteously forgiven* and himself put in a right and reconciled relation to God and His most holy law. For if righteousness come by deeds of our doing, "then Christ is dead in vain."<sup>1</sup>

IV. Consider *What is the opposite method to God's and what such method involves*. If we can work out our own justification for ourselves there is no need for Christ having died for us. We in that case required no substitute, and stand in need of no benefit from Christ taking our place and "dying the just one, in room of the unjust." For "works of law" are works done with a view to claim forgiveness and acceptance with God as a right we have achieved for ourselves; to get a good and valid title for ourselves so that we may fairly look for pardon and restoration to our lost status by virtue of what we have done or *are going to do*. In any such case, "Christ is dead in vain." The stupendous scheme of the mediation of the Son of God with all the divine proceedings bound

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 21.

up in it, might all have been spared. There was no need for any such work as that He "who was in the form of God" should have taken on Him "the form of a servant . . . and become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And the apostle holds that no adequate purpose was served by Christ drinking the bitter cup of Gethsemane or enduring the mental, moral and physical agonies of Calvary, if we could work out the whole thing for ourselves. If all Christ did was to give us an inspiring and ennobling example, or to seal to us certainty about a future state of rewards and punishments ; or to add merit or weight to our virtues so as to give them a finishing touch and make them more pleasing and valuable or help us to make up our lee-way—what do all such notions and theories amount to, but that Christ did something that somehow puts us in a favourable way of *doing for ourselves*? the very thing the apostle is emphatically denouncing and warning against with all his might ; for "justification is to him that *worketh not* but believeth";<sup>1</sup> and "all who believe are justified from all things";<sup>2</sup> and "a man is not justified by works of law but by trusting in Jesus Christ ; for by works of law shall no flesh be justified."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv. 5.<sup>2</sup> Acts xiii. 38, 39.<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 16.

But though no works of ours of any kind, whether of nature or of grace, can avail to make up for our sins, or qualify us to demand pardon and right status with God, yet it is this very position of being reponed and rehabilitated in our true status, "not by works of righteousness that we have done," but by our firm reliance on the mercy of God operating through the righteousness of Christ, which is the sure guarantee of the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in us.

V. For consider now, *What security for good character and works, being justified by faith affords.* Enclosed in Christ for righteousness unto justification we are by the same faith, and at the same time, enclosed in Christ for righteousness unto sanctification. To be enfolded in Christ's righteousness by faith is the sure way to have His true righteousness enfolded truly and to have it nestling lovingly within our bosom. Imparted or infused and inwrought righteousness is therefore never divorced from imputed righteousness; the faith that identifies us with Christ for pardon and acceptance is the faith that sweetly binds us up with Him for all holy living. There is an inseparable tie between these two things, forgiveness and holiness. It is this gracious union to Christ that constrains us to the integrity of

uprightness, to the very principle and requirement of the "law of the spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

For as long as a law dogs a man's footsteps, threatens and pursues him with obnoxious pains and penalties, as long as it affords him no safety and protection and peace, he cannot love or be loyal to that law. Such is the position or attitude of every unpardoned sinner towards God's law. He can lie quiet for a time and lull his conscience with soporific opiates and anodynes by all sorts of pilgrimages, penances, laborious penalties and the like, but ever and again there is the rousing up of the old bitter antipathy, whenever he begins to realise that—

"God's law grown clamorous tho' silent long  
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong.  
Asserts the rights of an offended Lord  
And death or restitution is the word.  
The last impossible, He fears the first,  
And having ill-deserved expects to feel the worst."

Any reiteration of commands and threatenings in these circumstances will not win the heart or remove the antipathy: nay, it will rather rouse the corruption in a man and embitter him the more against the condemning law. It is not that he does not know what he ought to do, but he is set against doing it or



affects to do it only slavishly and half-heartedly in a spirit of self-seeking and for self-protection's sake ; but the more the violated and unsatisfied law threatens him, his love for it is lessened and his attitude becomes more defiant, while his behaviour becomes more careless, reckless and indifferent, and his observance of it becomes more loose and strained. Tell him, however, of a method of perfect reconciliation on the part of the authorities ; tell him arrangements have been made for firmly maintaining the law, and yet a free pardon is heartily at his acceptance ; then, if ever, will he be wooed and won to new loyal-hearted and cordial obedience. New motives come into play as soon as a just and honourable reconciliation is effected. Hatred to the law is broken when its terrors and persecutions cease. The yoke of bitter bondage is gone. All the jealousies of mere bargain-making are done away with by the free proffer of full pardon and reconciliation upon public and righteous grounds. The man drops his arms of rebellion and resistance. His attachment to the law and its requirements becomes nobly free and cordial. He looks at it with a different eye. He serves it in another spirit :

“Thine hand hath loosed the bands of sin  
And bound me with Thy love.”

His lawlessness is gone: "He cannot sin, for he is born of God." This is the very spring and the beginning of all "newness of life." But until we find a righteousness to answer the divine requirement, there is nothing to really pacify a conscience that has waked up like Luther's to the awful and overwhelming sense of guilt before God. The ground, the only ground of true and lasting peace, is a better righteousness than any of our own; and the sight of God's way of this righteousness by faith is at once the vision of the glory and beauty of God's holy law, and an impulse to cleave to its principle with loyal-hearted devotion.

Once in a Christianised school—a school conducted on Christian methods—it was made a principle that if a pupil violated its government and regulations, the master should substitute his own voluntary sacrificial chastisement for that pupil's deserved punishment. "One day," says the master, "I called up before me a pupil eight or ten years of age, who had wilfully violated an important regulation of the school. All the pupils were looking on and they knew what the rule of the school was; I put the rod into the hand of that offending pupil; I extended my hand and told him to strike. The instant he saw my extended hand

and heard my command to strike, I saw a struggle begin in his face. A new light sprang up in his countenance. A new set of shuttles seemed to be weaving a new nature within him. I kept my hand extended and the school was in tears. The boy struck once, and he himself burst into tears. I watched his face. He seemed in a bath of fire which was giving him a new nature. He had a different mood toward the school and a different attitude toward the violated law. He went back to his seat, and ever afterwards was one of the most docile of pupils in the school, although he had been one of the rudest.”<sup>1</sup>

Such is ever the wonderful effect of the believing sight of the Father's love in bringing near His righteousness for us, and such is the constant and invariable result of any soul taking hold for itself of “the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Cook's “Orthodoxy,” pp. 118, 119.

## XII

### JUSTIFIED BY OUR WORKS—AND WORDS

“Ye see then how that by *works* a man is justified, and not by faith only.”—JAMES ii. 24.

“By thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”—MATT. xii. 37.

VERY noticeable, and very suggestive it is to remember that “good works” is exclusively a phrase of the Apostle Paul. He who sets such store by justification through faith only is he who most insists on the necessity and true value of what he calls good works. He it is who calls on us to be “zealous of good works.”<sup>1</sup> And he adds, “let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”<sup>2</sup> Nor is this to be a zeal in profession or theory only, but in real and actual practice: not a zeal for works that people may think good for buying salvation or for offering by way of bargaining with God; but works that are really good in themselves, with a prin-

<sup>1</sup> Titus ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Titus iii. 14.

ciple of holy love to God and man in them, and a motive of true obedience to God's high and holy will animating and directing them ; works that are rendered good by proceeding from a good and sanctified nature and characterised by that self-denying and self-sacrificing benevolence which is, if not an adequate, yet a genuine and single-hearted response to that unparalleled act of divine generosity, and of beneficent goodwill for us, all unworthy, which draws out the soul to say

“ Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Yes : it is the Apostle Paul who declares—  
“ These things I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”<sup>1</sup> But this has constantly, he says, to be *affirmed* and reiterated, because there is as much danger of self-delusion in resting on a *profession* of faith without the reality, as in trusting to good works for a title to pardon and peace. If a man *say* he hath faith in the Lord Jesus but can offer no evidence that he has it, can *that* be saving faith for him? Faith that has no proof to adduce of its existence except talk and profession, a mere

<sup>1</sup> Titus iii. 8.

wind of words, is a sheer dead nonentity, a semblance and a sham, as a corpse is of a living body. This is what the Apostle James also is always saying. He never indeed utters a word against justifying or saving faith. It is James who says—"Abraham *believed* in God and it was counted to him for righteousness." But he is none the less always crying, "*Shew* me your faith by your works." Else, how can you know, or other people either, whether you have it, if you have no suitable proof or convincing evidence? And in order the more to shame professing believers, both out of hypocrisy and of self-deception, he uses a form of words, or method of utterance, that startles by its very paradoxicalness when compared with Paul's words—"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without works of law."<sup>1</sup> Such are the words of the one; but says the other—"Ye see then how that by works (mark he does not speak of 'works of law,' but simply works or activities) a man is justified and not by faith only."<sup>2</sup> A clear contradiction? Yes, verbally or in words. But this is not an uncommon style of formal contradiction, though of real agreement; and not of agreement only, but of strong mutual support of apparent opposites. Thus one proverb exhorts,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 28.<sup>2</sup> James ii. 24.



“Answer a fool according to his folly.” But the adjoining one says, “Answer *not* a fool according to his folly.”<sup>1</sup> Direct verbal contradictions! Yet how forcible are such right but *paradoxical* words! It is easy to see that “according to” is to be taken in two different senses—in the one case, meaning as his folly deserves, and in the other case not such as his folly dictates. This sort of paradox furnishes a key to the supposed antagonism between Paul and James. It is plain that “justified” is used by them in two different senses, because in two different connections: especially as, while the Apostle Paul says, “Justified by faith,” and James says, “Justified by works.” Our Lord Himself uses “justified” in yet a third connection when He says, “For by thy *words* thou shalt be *justified*, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned.”<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle Paul is writing to a sinner seeking peace with God for his own soul. His answer is, “Before God, and at the bar of conscience, you are justified as a sinner, and are reconciled to Him and to His law, solely by trusting in Jesus: and that confidence you must hold firm and fast to the very end.”

The Apostle James is warning against the fearful danger and delusion he was dreading

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 37.

might steal into the Church, that a *professed* faith is the same as a *real* faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul says "If you want to be justified *as a sinner before God*, you have nothing to do with your works, but with your standing in Christ for righteousness, the benefits of which you can get only by your faith in Him.

James says, "But if you want to be justified before God and men and your own conscience, *as a believer in Jesus Christ*, you must have genuine evidence in real and substantial facts which you can adduce. All real faith in Christ is something that *works*; and it works by *love*, with works that cannot be gainsaid. As a *sinner* needing *peace*, you are justified by faith in Jesus only: as a *believer* needing *proof* that you *are* a believer, you are justified by works and not by professions only, however loud. Happily, to make the matter still more clear both Paul and James use exactly the same illustration of what they respectively mean, and by it we can gauge their exact design. They both introduce the case of Abraham. Paul says, "If Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him unto righteousness." And James says "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he

had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought (effectually operated) with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect (completely certified and evinced). And the Scripture was *fulfilled* that saith, Abraham *believed* God and *it* was imputed to him unto righteousness." So it was not his works but his faith that was imputed to him for righteousness according also to the teaching of James.

But inasmuch as they are using "justified" in two different aspects, there is a different complexion tinging all the other words. "Faith," for example, means with Paul, actual faith in Jesus Christ. With James it means professed and merely theoretic or speculative faith; orthodoxy of creed it may be, but without the saving salt or soul of personal trust in Jesus Christ; a thing that is dead as a corpse "being alone" without the spirit of genuine living trust in the Saviour. Works with Paul means *merits*; "works of law" things done to acquire a right and title to pardon and acceptance with God. Works with James means *realities*, as distinct from shams and bare professions. So they quote the very same Scripture in the same sense but in quite different connections and for quite different purposes. James is entirely agreed with Paul's justification by faith alone,

for he says "Abraham believed God and *it* was imputed for righteousness." But James introduces the verse by the words, "And the Scripture was fulfilled," when Abraham had offered, or, at least, honoured the command to offer, his son on the altar. In short, the grand declaration about Abraham having believed God was *proved to be true* and Abraham *as a believer* was justified in having such a name given him. "His believing" made him the friend of God: his works made him be *called*, and justly, "the friend of God." He was the father of all them that believe, as soon as he believed; but that he did really believe so as to have his faith taken into account by God was *proved a true saying*, and he was justified as a true believer in God by what he afterwards did. In the same way Rahab the harlot is said to have been justified—not as a sinner before God—but as one who said she believed the things she had heard about Israel—by a course of dealing with the spies, that showed that her professions and promises were real.

In a different but kindred sense our Lord says, "By thy *words* thou shalt be justified or condemned." Some of his pharisaic hearers in their virulent prejudice declared of Him "this man casts out demons by Beelzebub." And when He took them to task and uttered warnings

that scared their inmost spirits, they tried to explain away their taunt, "It was a casual remark and we did not mean all you attribute to us." He virtually answers, "Your words are there in evidence for or against you. Every word tells its own tale and comes up as a witness in judgment." By words you reveal your inner spirit: unmistakeable marks they are, to acquit or condemn you in your allegations; especially your idle words, that is your words casually dropped. These are they that inadvertently reveal what spirit you are of. So by faith we are justified in God's sight as sinners, And by works or self-revealing casual words we are justified as unmistakable *evidence* of the reality of our faith in the open sight and judgment of all. The vital need, the real place and the true nature of good works, and how they cannot fail to be done are all set forth in such an evangelical passage as this:—*After that* the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, *not by works of righteousness that we have done*, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. . . . *These things* I will that thou affirm constantly *in order that* they who have *believed* in God might be careful to maintain

good works." For good works have great and manifold evangelical uses—for *ourselves*, for *others*, for *God*.

For *ourselves*, as evidences of gospel believing, they strengthen our own belief in the great remedial scheme which produces natively such results, and they are valuable for helping us to apply the right and unmistakable tests to the genuineness and vitality of the principle of faith in us.

For *others*, they not only evince what our faith is, if we do good and communicate and are zealous in Christ-like service of every kind, but they conciliate the hearts of men to the faith we possess and to Christian verities, if they see them working in us by love—if they see us unmistakably beneficent and self-denyingly solicitous for others' weal.

So, finally, they get to be good works for *God*; for though after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; yet by our good works witnessed by others the name of the Lord our Saviour is magnified and gets to be synonymous with whatsoever things are true and pure and honourable and lovely or of good report, and opposite to all sorts of malice, avarice, injustice, pride, lust, and cruelty. So believers are called on to be doers of the word and not hearers only; to so speak and so do as they



that shall be judged by the law of liberty ; and to let the reality of their evangelical faith be judged by its good fruits, for as professing believers they are on their trial and must submit to be justified by their works and not by conventionalities only. We may, just before closing, expose the strange doctrine of works of *supererogation*, or the conceived possibility of doing more for God than He requires and of exceeding in our duty and service to Him. Those who do more holy things than to be "holy in all manner of life," must of course have an excess of merit beyond their own need ! This excess of merit must not be lost ; so "the Church" has thriftily treasured it up for the benefit of those who are worse off ; and out of this storehouse she is prepared *for value received* to serve it out to needy sinners by way of *indulgences*. This was what Tetzels was dealing in, so shamelessly (as most folks thought), yet so lucratively, when Luther led the outburst of indignation against the disgraceful dogma and practice. The only defence of it lies in drawing a distinction between things *required* in Scripture and things *recommended*. But the use made of this distinction is seen to be baseless the moment we see that the things that are recommended are things recommended simply as a way of more

efficiently doing our duty, not a way of exceeding duty—a thing impossible for any mere human being. In ordinary life, to exceed the path of duty is commonly and rightfully *blamed* as officiousness. The Lord will have obedience and not officiousness in service.

### XIII

## THE COMFORTER

“The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost.”—JOHN xiv. 26.

ONE chief outstanding name for the Holy Spirit is “*The Comforter*.” The first and and greatest Comforter was Jesus Himself. “*Another* Comforter the Father will send in My name;” He said to His disconsolate disciples in prospect of Himself being parted from them. By “*Another*” Comforter He intimates that all He had Himself been to them, *that* would the coming Spirit be found to be in their happy experience after a yet more inward fashion.

In short the Holy Spirit was to be His substitute and representative not only “with” them but “in” them; to be by His ever-abiding, indwelling “presence” the only “Vicar” or representative of Himself that His Church and people should ever need. By Christ’s atoning work, the way for the Holy Spirit’s coming was made clear and open: and as in the economy of grace, all things are of God

the Father, it is He who sends the Comforter ; desiring and delighting, as He does, in man's full and complete salvation : and if the Son is said to pray the Father to send Him, it is not that there is any reluctance in the Father ; for the expression " I will pray " never means to entreat or beseech as at the hands of an unwilling bestower—but that this second of the greatest divine gifts should be equally associated with the Son Himself as with the Father. For the Holy Spirit's highest work is to make each heart where He dwells, the dwelling-place of *Christ*. The truth which the Holy Spirit shows is Christ's truth ; the graces He imparts are Christ's graces ; the joy and peace He effects are Christ's own joy and peace. In short, the Holy Spirit is the true and full interpreter of *Christ* to the heart, as Christ Himself is the true and full interpreter of the Father. It is His function to " take of the things of *Christ* and show them unto us." So Christ is the object He reveals to us ; the object He reproduces in us ; the object He glorifies before us. He is Christ's advocate with us, to persuade and enable us to embrace Christ offered us in the Gospel, just as Christ Himself is our advocate with the Father. For the same word is applied to them both ; and the term Comforter, Advocate or "*Paraclete*"

is a very striking and comprehensive one. It means a patron-friend of high rank and influence whom we can summon to our aid under all the varying circumstances of our need ; one who can act in our interest in so many varied ways, a guardian, a counsellor, an interpleader, a guide, a monitor, a protector, a consoler, a supporter. All this Christ had been to His disciples. He had espoused their higher good ; had brought in upon them untold spiritual blessings ; had made them heirs of many undreamed of privileges ; had introduced them to their Father in Heaven, taught them how to address Him, and order their cause before Him and pour out their hearts to Him ; had shown them how to face danger and trouble, by a dauntless trust both in the Father and in Himself ; had lifted their hearts above doubt and distraction ; remorseful fear and anxious foreboding ; had instructed them in the divine arts of patience, meekness, submission ; had heartened them under disappointments and distresses ; had armed them against the wiles and temptations of their great and subtle adversary, and had trained them to overcome Him ; and had poured into their hearts a blessedness born of God, full of purity, pity, mercifulness, forgivingness and all benignity. Similar functions would continue to be dis-

charged by the Holy Spirit—in yet fuller and more immediate fashion.

“That Holy Spirit sent from God  
Shall your whole souls inspire :  
Shall fill your minds with sacred truth,  
Your hearts with sacred fire.”

It is His work to help us to realise Christ's constant, inward, abiding presence, and in measure as we get to be “filled with the Spirit,” or “live in the Spirit,” or “walk in the Spirit,” He brings in upon us the comforting and hallowing convictions and experiences of the children of God. We get to know and feel ourselves, in all lowliness and gracious wonderment, to be “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus.” For “as many as are led by the Spirit of God,” and not by their own lusts and self-will and self-pleasing, “they are the sons of God.” They get to have an assurance and attestation of their having been born of God, by their felt love for God and their desire by love to serve others as brethren, and in measure as they surrender themselves to this spirit of Christ and to the monitions of His word, they receive strength to prosecute holiness still more resolutely in the fear of the Lord with a true though often imperfect and broken satisfaction. Still delighting in the law of the Lord in the inner man, and growing in



holiness after the image of their divine master, and cherishing communion with Him whom they have learned to think of and address as "Abba, Father," they begin to realise that the Holy Spirit attests to them and witnesses with their own Spirits that they are real children of God, truly though it may be but very poorly, loving, serving and following Him with the whole heart. In this way, and through various monitions and experiences, they grow into a moral certainty of their being in an accepted and saved condition, just as the moral nature is being renewed within. And this is "no vain confidence, alien from all godliness," as some would fain insinuate. For it is a confidence that reposes entirely on Him "who is able to keep us from falling and to preserve us and present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." There is not only a peace "in believing," but a higher and more advanced and fuller measure of it in prolonged obedience: "*Great peace have they that keep Thy law.*" For in proportion as Christ is made unto any soul, "sanctification," there can hardly fail to be in that soul a "joy of the Lord," a fresh "comfort of love," and "a good hope" through heavenly grace. To attain to some measure of this assurance of personal salvation is a matter of duty on their

part no less than of privileged experience, by the One Spirit. To this end, they are represented as "sealed" with "that holy Spirit of promise," "sealed unto the day of redemption." They become more or less consciously "kings and priests unto God, even the Father," as well as prophets to "shew forth" and testify to the grace of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. Having been enabled to grasp the victory over the world the flesh and the devil, they are enabled in some measure to appropriate, by the meekness and self-abasement of a genuine faith, those vast and varied promises that lift them above unbelieving doubts and fears and surmisings; and setting their feet on the impregnable rock of God's own word, they feel at liberty to say :—

"My God the covenant of Thy love  
Abides for ever sure,  
And in its matchless grace I find  
My happiness secure."

Realising in themselves the stamp, the seal, the mintage of heaven, they find in their deepest being, unmistakable evidences of the fruit of the Spirit, "joy, love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance," and all the other Christian graces, inward and outward. How can these things

be in them and abound, unless they be the fruit of "the unction of the Holy One," the sacred anointing that makes God's people "priests" unto God—with a desire to love and live for others, to sacrifice and deny themselves for the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer, and to live in some measure up to the privileges of their high and heavenly calling. They are able with devout and lowly, yet assured conviction to appropriate and apply to themselves such words of personal persuasion as these:—"The Lord is my Shepherd": "Thou Lord who knowest all things, knowest that I love Thee": "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that for me which I have committed to His trust against that day": or "The life I am living in the flesh, I am living by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." How distinct and how distinguishable is all this quiet, prayerful, trustful assurance of hope in the Lord, from the loud, blatant, boastful self-assurance which only confirms the wise man's word, "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." And hardly less foolish is he who trusts in his own vows and resolutions, in his own efforts and his own unaided imaginary strength of will and purpose. It is the man who is growing in profound and

lowly self-distrust who is also growing most in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the calm triumphant following in His steps. The purer and holier the nature, the more sensitive it is to its own defects (as the whiter the wall, the more distressfully noticeable are any stains on it), and the more prayerfully vigilant does this new nature become against all insidious workings of evil; and the spirit of a deep self-jealousy is thereby engendered. The Apostle Paul, who writes about himself so early as A.D. 58, and declares to the Corinthians that he felt he was "not meet to be called an *Apostle*," can acknowledge in A.D. 62, four years later, to the Ephesians, that he feels himself "less than the least of all *saints*"; and finally, a good while after, and indeed just a year before his death, when riper than ever for glory, he describes himself to Timothy as a very "*chief of sinners*." This deepening self-distrust and self-abasement is not only compatible with, but is the very strongest proof of his being entitled to cherish the assurance of being enabled to persevere in holy attachment and devoted love and service to the end. This is the perseverance of the saints with its spirit-taught quiet assurance. "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly

kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever." So, the Holy Spirit, the more fully He lodges and works in a man, is felt to be the "awful, tender Holy Ghost"—the more awful in His holy jealousy about us, the more gently tender in His swaying influence over us. He is the true minister of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ."<sup>1</sup> the more he becomes the "earnest," the very pledge and sample of a holy heaven. "Verily your souls are *purified* in obeying the truth through the Spirit," who prepares us thus for a place among all them "that are being

<sup>1</sup> People who have known the infinite tenderness and gentleness of Christ Jesus, as ministered by the Holy Spirit, can never feel any need for any Virgin intercessor or any aid from a feminine helper, however "full of grace" she may be thought to be. Here is an illustrative example. "Our landlady in Siena was an enlightened Catholic and a most warm-hearted Christian woman. . . . She was dissatisfied with the mass, had a contempt for the confessional and even for the priests. She laughed at Purgatory and denied the worship of images and saints. But the Virgin she could not give up. 'In God I have a Father,' she said, 'and a brother in my Lord Jesus, but I need a sister too, and can only find her in *Mary*.' Then he pointed her to the three parables in Luke's Gospel, 15th chapter: that of the father yearning over his prodigal child; of the son, the shepherd going after the lost sheep; and of *the Spirit, the woman* searching for her lost piece of silver, and when she found it, calling on her friends, 'Rejoice with me.' . . . To all this she listened most eagerly, saying, 'Oh, why did no one ever show me this before? *I have been seeking my God in a woman and now I have found the woman in my God.*'"—From *Life of Wm. Robertson of Irvine*, by Dr James Brown.

sanctified according to the faith and hope and love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

To all who entertain the Holy Ghost as their Comforter, He ministers perennial and everlasting consolations and good hope through grace. It is His place and function to wake in them a sense of and yearning for "the *fulness* of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ." He makes them aware, for example, how "Christ our Saviour hath abolished death." That is, He has changed the whole nature and aspect of it; has transformed and transfigured it from being just sin's awful penalty and darkest shadow, into something very, very different. By dying for us Christ has evacuated the death-penalty and delivered those who through fear of death had otherwise been all their lifetime subject to its bondage; while by His rising in triumph over its usurped sway, He has brought out into the very light of day the immortality and life, which had been perchance surmised before, but only half realised and half believed. So though *the fact* of dying remains, yet the experience of dying is not death; it is no longer a state of darkness "as darkness itself where the light is as darkness": nor any longer mere desertion, desolation and loneliness: nor mere loss and deprivation without compensating gains: nor an abyss of horror and final sentence



of doom. No doubt it is the last enemy and has to be encountered ; but it is no longer an unvanquished foe. It has met more than its match. The Lord is risen, and armed with resurrection power, He is to inflict a further and final, irretrievable defeat ; and death itself shall die. Its own awful name is to describe its own last fortune and fate. The great devourer is to be itself devoured, and what swallows us all up is to be itself victoriously swallowed up. Even the prolongation and universality of death's present reign shall serve only in the end to enhance its final defeat. So its sting is extracted, its terrors cease, and, "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory," is the true Christian's song. Whatever evils he feels, he fears none of them. Death is robbed of its penal character and becomes the final act of the Holy Spirit's application of the Father's gracious discipline, so as to make us partakers of His Holiness. They rest from their labours. "Blessed are the dead from henceforth. YEA, saith the spirit, they rest from their labours." Thus falling back, at last, as at first, on the one mediator and His sin-atonement work, the dying saint, like a lowly penitent, yet with fiducial meekness, is enabled to breathe out his soul as the dying Saviour Himself did in

that great trust-deed of consignment ; “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” or in such words as those of the proto-martyr Stephen, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” \* This is the final comfort of the Holy Ghost. This is the true, the *supreme unction*, “ the anointing of the Holy One,” the true evangelical *viaticum* that strengthens the soul in life and cheers and supports it in death, and makes us at last more than conquerors over all fears and all foes ; even the last and worst enemy himself.

## XIV

# YOUR FELLOWSHIP FOR FURTHER- ANCE OF THE GOSPEL

### SYNOD SERMON <sup>1</sup>

"Your fellowship in the gospel"—or rather, according to the Revised Version—"your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel."—PHIL. i. 5.

THE word "fellowship" is a somewhat noteworthy one in apostolic usage and in the life of the Primitive Church. It bears a technical meaning of its own, gathering around it, as it does, some of the most exalted associations of a purely Christian order. We hear of "the fellowship" as soon as the Church of the first days appears in Pentecostal power and under Pentecostal influences. Each member of the new community recognised in every other a partner in Christ Jesus and all of them recognised themselves for His sake partners one of another.

This copartnery or sacred association, this truly holy alliance, was signalled by the name of THE FELLOWSHIP—a name borne by the

<sup>1</sup> In Regent Square Church, London, Monday, May 4, 1903.

Church itself as a spiritual brotherhood, existing for Christian purposes, especially for the furtherance of the gospel. In the New Testament this word fellowship holds a most prominent position, though the fact may be somewhat hidden from the casual reader by the original term being variously translated. But being uniformly now rendered "fellowship" in the Revised Version, we find it not fewer than five times in this brief epistle alone.

For, besides our text with its "fellowship in furtherance of the gospel," we read in it of the "fellowship of the Spirit," of the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings," of "fellowship with my affliction," and of "fellowship with Me in the matter of giving and receiving." So we read elsewhere, "They continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship"; "God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ"; "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"; "We have fellowship one with another"—and there are many similar passages. Now it is this fellowship the apostle is here making the subject both of fervent thanks and of earnest prayer: "I thank my God . . . making my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel."

What is there in or about this fellowship to

evoke the apostle's devout thankfulness? and what to call forth earnest prayer on its behalf? These are the two questions we would now endeavour to answer.

I. WHAT IS THERE IN AND ABOUT THIS FELLOWSHIP TO EVOKE FOR IT DEVOUT THANKS?

The very nature of it and its varied manifestations will abundantly explain and justify such thanksgiving. This fellowship has a twofold aspect: one, Godward and Christward; the other, manward and brotherward.

Primarily, and on its upper side, it meant participation in the divine nature, because of fellowship with the Father through the Son by virtue of the communion, or fellowship, of the Holy Ghost. Centrally, it was fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in His cross and passion, fellowship with Him in the benefit of His atoning death and His resurrection life, the fellowship of the body and blood of the Lord, the very fellowship of His Spirit.

Out of this grew the other or more human aspect of it; fellowship in, with, and for one another, that found expression in such forms as: "the right hand of fellowship"; "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints"; the "fellowship of giving and receiving"; the "fellowship in furtherance of the gospel."

Fellowship with Christ Jesus—that was the divine side of it; fellowship for His sake with one another—that was its human side.

(1) *The Upper or Divine Side of it.* In the Son of God there had been presented not only a new revelation of the Father, but a living embodiment of the divine nature—not only a new approach of God to men, but a new and happy mode of men's approach to God. Fellowship with Christ was not only reconciliation to God but participation in the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Him, whereby at once the aching void of man's nature was being filled and His disordered relationships at the same time rectified. A blessed sense of God's redeeming grace, and of His restoring and renewing love was the immediate accompaniment of fellowship with the Lord Jesus in all His saving offices and influences. Faith in Himself constituted its simple but effective bond, serving, as it does, the twofold purpose of *introducing* men into its privileges and of *producing* in them the spiritual disposition inseparable from its enjoyment. Thus the parched and arid waste of man's nature were being refreshed by the new downpour of divine grace, mercy, and peace. And, just as after a season of drought when a spirit of languishing has settled on the face of Nature, if the windows of heaven



be opened and the rains descend in full flood, the springs that had ceased to flow and been cut off from their supplies get replenished from above, so, let but a new sense of God's saving love descend on our nature, let but the Cross of Christ, which at once reveals and attests the breaking of heaven's clouds in blessings on our head, penetrate the hard crust of human unbelief, then the deepest well-springs of men's hearts are reached, the fountains of the great deep are broken up and there begins to gush forth the tide of a new life in exhaustless streams of peace and goodwill. This was the master-principle of all those manifestations of new kinship alike with God and with man that were so characteristic of Pentecostal times. Nothing was too high, nothing too arduous, for the spirit that thrilled through so exalted experiences. To persuade men everywhere to become the present happy, enriched, and free shareholders of such benefits, to see others made heirs with themselves of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ—nothing less was contemplated by those who already enjoyed the exhaustless boon. Out of such experiences arose as of necessity

(2) *The Human Side of this Fellowship.*  
Caught up into an absorbing consciousness of a fellowship truly divine, the converts presented

to the eyes of an astonished world the spectacle of one body and one spirit, swept along in the full current of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," who was evidently in them all, moving them along in the one same united "hope of their calling." Hence, those revelations of ardent zeal and glowing cordiality toward one another that lent such attractiveness to the Christian fellowship, and made it full of warm attachments, so different from the wrangling din of warring sects, philosophic or otherwise, and the fanatical bitterness and animosity that raged around. Hence we read of the early converts how contrariwise they were all of one heart and of one purpose, they met with one accord in one place, their fellow-Christians were the brotherhood and their organisation was the fellowship, while in the self-abandonment of Christian devotedness they could afford to be communists, ecclesiastically speaking, for Christ's sake and the gospel, with common central funds and yet without either violating the rights of private property or doing damage in the least degree to family or other social ties and claims. Here was nothing of violence or of coercion. All was of spontaneity from within, nothing of pressure from without. As Peter said to Ananias,

"While your possession remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" This co-operative temper, this spirit of goodwill, working as it did along the most altruistic and self-denying lines, sprang out of a sense of immeasurable indebtedness to the Lord for whose sake they felt themselves to be simply stewards. "No man reckoned ought he had to be his own." It was lent on trust for highest ends, and each considered himself answerable to the Lord for the way he laid it out.

Ah! how different this in spirit, temper, motive, purpose from all mere earthly communisms that have sought their Utopias in forcible redistributions of wealth, thinking to ameliorate the evils of human condition without attempting to at the same time rectify the evils of human nature, creating thus an atmosphere of delusive hopes too ethereal for anything but monomania to breathe, and conjuring up air-castles at whose fading shapes the irony of bitter experience points the mocking finger! How different the spirit and working of the gospel fellowship! What a bond of union it constituted for all who came under its charm! What an *esprit de corps* it developed in the ranks of the new converts! What a levelling-up process it inaugurated in their common life! And what a

potent influence for kindling the sparks of generous love and fanning them into a blaze of sympathetic attachments and mutual aid! This was what acted like a spell on men's minds, and led multitudes to whisper in solemn wonderment, "Behold, how these Christians love one another!"

The genial glow of such a fellowship was the sunny spot, the warm hearth that drew around it the sin-smitten, shivering outcasts of humanity. Such a vision of a holy, happy, and tender fellowship was like the dawn of a new era, the omen of returning calm to many a doubt-tossed spirit; a light from heaven to many wistful gazers in the dark, whose yearning question, "Watchman, what of the night?" was now receiving its hopeful answer: "The night cometh, and also the day; if ye will enquire, enquire ye. Return! Come!" It was like Bunyan's early vision, as a young man, when catching sight of the sunny hill and the pious women of Bedford, so radiant and happy on its pleasant slopes, and feeling himself in the chill shadow and darkness outside the great wall, he was seized with a resistless impulse to pass through the gate, and, like the apostle, "essay to join himself to the disciples." Surely there is in such a fellowship abundant cause for devoutest and most fervent thankfulness.

## II. AND YET CONSIDER WHAT THERE IS IN OR ABOUT THIS FELLOWSHIP TO DEMAND EARNEST PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION

While devoutly thankful for such a fellowship, the apostle is none the less devoutly anxious and solicitous on its behalf. No sooner has he expressed thanks for it than he begins to make eager petition for it. This may seem a paradox to the unspiritual mind ; but it is the ordinary mystery of all vigorous life. Far from being incompatible, the two exercises—thanks and petition—are easily caught up into a happy unity in the devout soul, as railway passengers in the rushing train are seen to be at rest and in motion at the same moment. Now, prayer being based on a sublime satisfaction with divine gifts and blessings, but also on a sublime dissatisfaction with our own poor and unworthy attainments in them, the apostle makes his supplication *with joy*, true prayer being as free from querulous discontent as it is from cloddish self-content. Ah, my brethren, is it not of the very essence and genius of this fellowship that it exists not for itself, but is created and maintained expressly for the furtherance of the gospel? Oh, then, that it may not belie its own nature, nor prove false and recreant to its own ideal. Oh, that this fellowship may be

found ever true and loyal to its own inherent principles ; no inert nor dormant thing, but a potent and effective agency for the furtherance of the gospel. On this the apostle's own heart is set, and to promote it he has organised a whole system of prayer and supplication over the Church wherever his influence could reach ; and here he himself leads the way, in the spirit of disinterested loyalty. How he enters into the very innermost soul of this fellowship ! And should anyone imagine because he says, " I thank my God," that the joyous fellowship of the gospel is in league with any self-seeking aims and projects, how speedily must such a one be undeceived !

Was it not solely and wholly because others were being blessed that a thrill of grateful delight animates the apostle in his devotions ? Are not his whole thanks and prayers here not for himself at all, but for the good of others, and for the furtherance of goodness in them ? Oh, it is such a divinely beautiful effect of fellowship with Christ that it awakens and maintains so pure an interest in, and so pure a regard for, the well-being and the well-doing of others, as to originate and increase all practical means and measures for their blessedness. A soul rich in a consciousness of divine fellowship can never surround its sacred treasure



with any iron fence of protection. Far from the expression "My God" involving any selfish claim, it involves entire surrender to Him, and this is to break for ever with the self-seeking spirit. He who thus unreservedly yields to another can never be self-centred. Dearly as human nature may love monopolies, there are possessions that elude all attempts at monopolising, and mock at every effort to subject them to selfish ends and aims. We can no more make of the divine fellowship an exclusive possession than we can make of sunshine a private property. Conscious possession of God is ever nobly expansive. No self-seeking disposition can attain to it. The higher a fire shoots its heat and flame to heaven, the wider will it cast its genial warmth around; so the more fully the spirit of divine fellowship is realised, the more magnanimous and disinterested does it become. This is what stamps a man with the seal of divine loftiness and shows him to be a partaker of the divine nature; and this is what breathes and burns in the bosom of the apostle here as he thanks God because others share in the blessings of the fellowship, and as he prays that their blessedness may be yet further enhanced by themselves desiring to spread the exhaustless boon. Hence his fervid solicitude for the

furtherance of the gospel, the furtherance of the right spirit of the gospel, so as to make it better understood ; so as to remove misconceptions and disarm groundless prejudices, and give people truer and therefore more favourable ideas of it, and present to them, not in word only, but in deed and in truth, a fairer example and a more winsome demonstration of what this fellowship really is and what it is meant to do. For are not misconceptions of the gospel, and sins against its fellowship, among the main causes of its hindrance and among the most stubborn obstacles to its furtherance ? The apostle prays, therefore, that the fellowship, being more fully rooted in and knit together and cemented by means of the gospel, should more clearly and fully reflect the spirit of the gospel and secure its diffusion at home and abroad. Passionate enthusiasm for the furtherance of the gospel is the very life-blood of the fellowship. For sacred love being of its very essence, it is by nature diffusive. The attempt to confine this fellowship extinguishes it ; and it must languish and die if not allowed to be expansively operative. Indifference here were treason and disloyalty. But more is needed than passionate enthusiasm. "This I pray," adds the apostle, by way of illustration, "that your love may

abound in knowledge and in all judgment," that it be no mere transient nor unenlightened emotion, but should overflow in wise, public-spirited, and intelligent appreciation of the best and fittest ways and means for the furtherance of the gospel. The best intentions here are not enough. These require to be informed and controlled by spiritual thought and prayerful consideration to prevent mistakes in effort and policy. To check a counterfeit coin we must not merely look to its image or superscription, but bring the quality of its metal also to the test. Here is a fellowship that exists for the express purpose of furthering the gospel, and the apostle sets no limit to this furtherance so long as there is anything in the gospel that needs to be furthered, or any place on earth in which to further it. The field is boundless in which it expatiates, embracing all human interests and activities, personal, domestic, social, political, commercial, educational, and aiming at the regeneration of the individual, of society, and of the whole race. For did not this fellowship unfold itself first as a great home mission enterprise at Jerusalem, then colonial at Antioch, and then a foreign mission enterprise in Macedonia? But it must be ever in accord with Christ's own redeeming plans and pursuits, and be

evermore imbued with His own Spirit, methods, command, and example. This is the ultimate test and standard. On this we must ever fall back as the alone adequate guarantee and security for all the requisite variety of wise effort and enterprise. This alone will bring the whole fellowship to realise itself as existing in fullest fellowship with Christ Himself for the furtherance of the gospel. The Lord grant this more and more in our own portion of the fellowship, for His own Name's sake for the spiritual good of men and for the glory of God, ever the Father. Amen.

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